

COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICE HRA ESTATE SERVICES POLICY



Glossary of Terms

Adopted Highway: A road or footpath that has been taken over and is maintained by the Local Highway Authority.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): Behaviour causing harassment, alarm or distress to others, as defined in relevant legislation and council policy.

Arboriculture Surveyor: A qualified specialist trained to assess health, safety and maintenance needs of trees.

Communal Areas: internal and external shared areas owned or managed by HBBC (e.g., laundries, kitchens, lounges, hallways, landings, stairwells, bin/bike/scooter stores, walkways, parking bays, amenity grounds and external storage).

Consumer Standards: Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing outlining expectations for safety, quality, transparency and tenant engagement.

Estate: localities where HBBC owns and manages property and land

Estate Improvement Officer: A council officer responsible for monitoring estate conditions, reporting issues and carrying out health and safety checks

Estate Inspection: A formal visit to an estate by council officers to assess cleanliness, safety, maintenance standards and compliance with tenancy conditions.

Fly-tipping: The illegal dumping of waste on land not licensed for that purpose.

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA): A systematic assessment of fire hazards and risks within communal areas, required under fire safety legislation.

Non-adopted Highway: A road or path that has not been adopted by the Local Highway Authority and remains the responsibility of the landowner.

Planned Maintenance: Scheduled works carried out to maintain or improve buildings and communal areas over time.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: Legislation placing duties on responsible persons to ensure fire safety in non-domestic premises and communal areas.

Service Standards: Published standards describing how often and to what quality services are delivered.

Introduction

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) works with residents and partners to ensure our estates and communal areas are clean, safe, well-maintained and welcoming. A high-quality environment supports wellbeing and pride in place.

Aim

This policy sets out the services we provide, our standards, and the shared responsibilities of residents and HBBC to achieve these outcomes together.

Scope

This policy applies to HBBC's housing estates, communal areas, and neighbourhoods where HBBC owns or manages properties. Under their tenancy or lease agreement, tenants and leaseholders must maintain their gardens and ensure no obstructions are kept in communal areas. Communal gardens are maintained by HBBC.

Regulatory & Legislative Requirements

Regulatory

HBBC will comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and the Consumer Standards (April 2024), including the Safety and Quality Standard. We will take reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants and leaseholders in homes and associated communal areas; provide effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements; identify and meet all statutory health and safety requirements; and complete required actions from legally mandated assessments within appropriate timescales.

Legislative

We are committed to complying with all relevant regulations, standards, and codes of practice governing compliance, health and safety will meet relevant statutory duties, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, carrying out fire risk assessments in the common areas of flats, hostel and sheltered housing accommodation.

Policy

1. Objectives

- 1.1 Keep estates and communal areas clean, safe, well maintained, and attractive places to live.
- 1.2 Work in partnership with residents , contractors, other local authorities and other public bodies as required.
- 1.3 Set out clear service standards for ground maintenance and communal cleaning.
- 1.4 Respect residents' chosen lifestyles where these do not breach tenancy agreements or negatively impact others or the environment.
- 1.5 Use tenancy and other enforcement where necessary to manage HBBC land.
- 1.6 Respond promptly to reports of problems on estates and in communal areas.
- 1.7 Work with internal and external partners and contractors to help maintain communal areas.
- 1.8 Involve residents in the management of estates and communal areas and act fairly, in line with equality and diversity principles.
- 1.9 Comply fully with relevant fire, health and safety and building legislation.
- 1.10 Publicise relevant service standards on building noticeboards and the council website, covering grounds maintenance and cleaning.

2. Service Standards

2.1 Estates

- 2.1.1 We will develop an annual estate inspection programme, which provides opportunities for residents' participation and to provide feedback. We will also carry out the following actions:
- 2.1.2 The Estate Improvement Officer will visit and inspect all blocks of flats every month.
- 2.1.3 We will monitor and review estate service contracts (e.g., cleaning and ground maintenance).
- 2.1.4 We will report repairs to the council's repairs service or other relevant agencies.
- 2.1.5 We will work with the Tenancy Management/ASB team to enforce tenancy agreement terms proactively.
- 2.1.6 We will increase staff visibility and resident access on estates.
- 2.1.7 We will proactively identify projects for estate improvements and increase biodiversity aligned with our HRA Land Strategy commitments.

- 2.1.8 We will encourage partnership working.
- 2.1.9 We will check for and report health and safety issues requiring action.
- 2.1.10 We will carry out Fire Risk Assessments and annual reviews and ensure that remedial actions are completed as required within agreed timescales.
- 2.1.11 Sheltered Housing and Hostel staff will carry out routine checks of communal buildings, including fire alarms, health and safety and security checks, and act on issues identified in a timely manner.

2.2 Communal Areas

- 2.2.1 We will provide an efficient, cost-effective cleaning service to designated internal communal areas.
- 2.2.2 Communal hallways, entrances, stairs and landings in blocks of flats will be cleaned regularly. The Estate Improvement Officer will monitor the effectiveness of the cleaning arrangements and liaise with contractors if improvements are required.
- 2.2.3 Cleaning of communal areas in sheltered and hostel accommodation will be monitored by onsite staff and issues of concern raised with relevant managers to be resolved.

2.3 Grounds Maintenance

- 2.3.1 We will maintain all communal grassed areas, hedges and shrub beds within our ownership. This will apply to all communal areas identified within our asset register.
- 2.3.2 We will implement and monitor the following minimum standards of maintenance:
- Amenity grassed areas are cut between 12-15 times a year, dependent on the growing season.
 - Shrub beds will be maintained, including a full winter prune between November to February.
 - All hedges will be cut each year as required.
 - Identified paved areas will be sprayed with herbicide as and when necessary to prevent weed growth.

2.4 Trees

- 2.4.1 Trees on communal land will be surveyed at least every three years (and more frequently during routine inspections). Remedial works to trees identified as dangerous, dead or diseased will be completed within the timescales recommended by the arboriculture surveyor. Non-urgent works will be prioritised from inspections and programmed surveys.
- 2.4.2 Trees growing within individual gardens are the responsibility of the residents to maintain. However, HBBC understands that arranging potential works and the associated costs can be daunting. HBBC will work with residents where necessary to discuss options to ensure works are carried out in a safe and timely manner.

2.5 Garage sites, Service Roads and Paths

- 2.5.1 We will develop a programme to ensure garage sites, service roads or paths under our responsibility (i.e., not adopted) clean, tidy, free from excessive weeds and well maintained. Leaf-fall from trees is a natural occurrence and cannot be fully controlled at all times.
- 2.5.2 Trip hazards will be identified and reported through inspections and site visits. Residents are encouraged to report suspected trip hazards, which will trigger an inspection and remedial action to make the area free from hazards.
- 2.5.3 Issues on adopted highways will be reported to the relevant Highways authority.

2.6 Abandoned Vehicles

- 2.6.1 Will be reported to the relevant team to be investigated and identify the owner to ensure that vehicles are removed.

2.7 Illegal Dumping of Rubbish (Fly-tipping)

- 2.7.1 We will investigate fly-tipping incidents and remove bulky items as soon as possible and particularly where there is a significant fire, health and safety risk.
- 2.7.2 Useful contact numbers for waste and recycling services will be published for residents. Where perpetrators are identified, HBBC will support enforcement action and seek to recharge the full costs of remedial works.

2.8 Vandalism and Graffiti

- 2.8.1 We will investigate all reports of vandalism to communal areas and work to address the issue and ensure that areas are made safe and offensive graffiti removed in a timely manner.

3. Residents' Responsibilities

- 3.1. We will remind residents of their responsibilities and enforce tenancy and leasehold terms where necessary but specifically ensure that:
- Communal Areas are kept clean and tidy.
 - They do not store items (e.g., bicycles, prams, mobility scooters) or cause obstructions in communal areas, including stairwells and entrances, in accordance with fire, health and safety regulations.
 - They do not dump household rubbish, furniture, white goods or other items in estates or communal areas.
 - They park considerately in estate parking and garage areas.
 - They do not run car repair or sales businesses from parking, garage or green areas.
 - Where permitted, pets are kept under control; dogs must be on leads in communal areas.
 - Pets are not allowed to foul or damage communal areas.

4. Resident Engagement

- 4.1 We will consult and involve residents about estate and communal services to meet their needs, encouraging them to report problems, complaints, or service failures.
- Participate in planned estate patchwalks.
 - Have their say via residents' groups, surveys and other channels.
 - Provide feedback when consulted about specific issues.
 - Suggest estate improvements.
 - Help develop service standards.
- 4.2 We will keep residents informed locally via noticeboards and measure satisfaction with cleaning and grounds maintenance through satisfaction surveys and reports to Tenant Involvement groups.

5. Accessibility

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants can access and understand this policy, regardless of disability, language, or communication needs.

We will provide the policy and related documents in alternative formats upon request, including but not limited to:

- Large print
- Braille
- Audio format
- Easy-read versions
- Translations into other languages

We will also make reasonable adjustments to support tenants with disabilities in understanding and engaging with tenancy-related processes, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Staff will be trained to identify and respond to accessibility needs and will offer support or signposting to appropriate services where necessary.

6. Monitoring & Reporting

- 6.1 The Housing Assets & Support Teams Manager will retain overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy including the monitoring and reporting of performance.

7. Review

- 7.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Housing Assets & Support Teams Manager. If necessary, this Policy will be reviewed sooner to incorporate legislative, regulatory, best practice developments, council decisions or address operational issues