

A photograph of a man and a woman in conversation, overlaid with a blue circular graphic containing text. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a white shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing glasses on her head and a patterned top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage. The blue circle is semi-transparent and contains the Cobalt Housing logo and the title of the document.

Cobalt
■■■ Housing

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
MANAGEMENT
POLICY**

Lead Director	Director of Operations
Reference	POL 68
Committee Review	Homes and Neighbourhoods Committee
Version date	June 2023

1 Introduction & Aim

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Management Policy sets out our approach to managing, maintaining and improving our neighbourhoods and communal areas. The quality of our neighbourhoods and the services we provide, enable our customers to feel safe and secure and have quiet enjoyment of their home, living in a neighbourhood they are proud of.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 Neighbourhood Management is a key role of registered providers. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard states that 'registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes'.

- 2.2 This policy sets out our approach to neighbourhood management and specifically:

- The management, maintenance and improvement of our neighbourhoods and communal areas
- How we will work with our partners and other agencies to deliver neighbourhood management
- The standards our customers can expect and their responsibilities

- 2.3 This policy has been developed with key internal teams including our Housing Management teams, Asset Management and Contract and Delivery teams. In order to ensure that our customers have the opportunity to shape this policy, we have consulted in a range of ways including through our Tenant Consultative Panel (TCP), through digital engagement using 'My Voice Matters' and through face to face customer consultation within our communities.

- 2.4 This policy applies to all our customers and Cobalt employees and contractors.

- 2.5 In applying this policy Cobalt will consider all necessary reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis in line with the Equality Act 2010.

- 2.6 Relevant legislation that has been considered when developing this policy includes the following non-exhaustive list:

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987
Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004
Equality Act 2010
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Regeneration Act 1993 (section 121)
The Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
Highways Act 1980
Data Protection Act 2018 and subsequent regulations

3 Policy Principles

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Management Policy is an overarching policy setting out our approach and the standards our customers can expect. The following areas are covered in this policy and are supported by additional existing policies and procedures:

- Neighbourhood Plans
- Neighbourhood Inspections
- Partnership Working
- Neighbourhood Management
 - Abandoned vehicles
 - Communal inspections and communal cleaning
 - Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Fly-Tipping and waste management
 - Garden condition

- Graffiti
- Grounds maintenance
- Tree management

3.2 Neighbourhood Plans

Cobalt will develop in partnership with our customers, colleagues and stakeholders individual Neighbourhood Plans for our core areas of Croxteth, Norris Green and Fazakerley/Sparrow Hall.

Our Neighbourhood Plans will be formally reviewed on an annual basis and will support our wider aims within our Asset Management, Development and Neighbourhoods strategies.

The Neighbourhood Plans will incorporate the profile of our assets and customer demographics, the activities planned across the neighbourhood for the coming 12 months and local priorities identified. Progress of our delivery will be monitored, and regular updates provided to our customers and stakeholders.

3.3 Neighbourhood Inspections

In order to ensure our neighbourhoods are maintained to a high standard and that any issues can be promptly identified and resolved, Cobalt will complete an inspection in each area on a quarterly basis. We will promote the dates of our inspections so that our customers are aware of our presence and we will provide feedback on any issues that are identified and how we are resolving them.

3.4 Partnership working

Cobalt recognise that to provide effective neighbourhood management we need to work in collaboration with our partners. Key partners who will support us in managing our neighbourhoods include:

- Liverpool City Council
- Merseyside Police
- Tenants and Residents Groups
- Local voluntary organisations

3.5 Neighbourhood Management

Cobalt will ensure that our neighbourhoods are safe, secure and well maintained. Our approach to neighbourhood management includes the following areas:

- **Abandoned vehicles**
All vehicles on land owned by Cobalt, including communal land and open spaces but not including individual properties with off road parking, must be in a road worthy condition and taxed, unless registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) as off road through the Statutory Off Road Notification. Cobalt will consider any vehicle that does not meet this criteria as having an adverse impact on our neighbourhood and will take appropriate action to remove the vehicle.
- **Communal inspections and communal cleaning**
Customers who benefit from an internal or external communal area need to ensure that the area is kept clear and free from personal items. Cobalt will inspect all our blocks with an internal communal area on a minimum of a monthly basis and ensure that the block is safe, any repairs are reported and the cleanliness of the block is monitored. Where a block benefits from an internal communal area the block will also be cleaned during this inspection.

- **Environmental anti-social behaviour**
Environmental anti-social behaviour can have a serious impact on our neighbourhoods and our customer's quality of life. It can also affect Cobalt's ability to maintain and improve our neighbourhoods. We aim to respond promptly to incidents of environmental anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods and to reduce incidents occurring. Environmental anti-social behaviour includes actions such as:

- Fly-tipping
- Fly-posting
- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- Littering

Cobalt will encourage customers to report and provide information relating to incidents of environmental ASB they witness to both Cobalt and other relevant statutory agencies such as the Police or Environmental Health. Any incidents reported to Cobalt will be robustly investigated and where possible relevant action taken either by Cobalt under the terms of our tenancy agreement and our Anti Social Behaviour Policy. Where appropriate Cobalt will work with other agencies to take the appropriate action.

Customers are responsible for making good or paying the cost of damage caused by deliberate acts of environmental anti-social behaviour, caused by themselves or any household members or visitors.

Cobalt will rectify any damage that has been caused as a result of environmental anti-social behaviour that is not the responsibility of a customer.

- **Fly-tipping and waste management**
Cobalt are responsible for removing litter and fly-tipping on land that we own, this includes communal bin areas.

Customers are responsible for ensuring that their household rubbish is disposed of appropriately, this includes both general household waste and large items such as household furniture and that these must be disposed of in line with local arrangements. We will work in partnership with Liverpool City Council to promote recycling and encourage customers to recycle their waste. We will support customers to dispose of items through providing advice and assistance and will also at regular intervals throughout the year, provide skips for customers to use as part of our community days.

- **Garden Condition**
Overgrown and untidy gardens can have a detrimental impact on our neighbourhoods and can often indicate that there are issues with property condition or that our customers may need some additional support in their tenancy. Cobalt will act promptly once a garden condition issue is identified and take appropriate tenancy action and/or offer support.
- **Graffiti**
Graffiti impacts our customers quality of life and enjoyment of their homes. It also creates a negative perception of our neighbourhoods and can impact their sustainability. We will act to remove graffiti efficiently. In cases of offensive graffiti this will be removed as an emergency within 48 hours (2 working days). Graffiti that is considered non offensive will be removed within 10 working days.
- **Grounds Maintenance**
Cobalt are responsible for maintaining communal garden areas in our flat type accommodation and also areas of open spaces in the community that we own. We will complete regular grass cuts during the Summer growing season, annual pruning of shrubs and litter picks.

- Tree Management
Trees in our ownership will be surveyed and maintained on a 3 yearly basis. Any trees identified as being a risk or dangerous outside of this cycle will be made safe immediately.

4 Risk Management

- 4.1 Failure to have a policy on our approach to Neighbourhood Management and adequately delivering services in line with this policy impacts on our regulatory risk and could impact the sustainability of our neighbourhoods.

Risk Register Ref:	Risk:
ST19 Customer Expectations	Service delivery does not met customers needs expectations or service standards.
Risk Consequences:	Management and Mitigation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to deliver neighbourhood management to a high standard could impact on the level of customer satisfaction and the overall sustainability of our neighbourhoods • Failure to work with our partners to deliver neighbourhood management effectively could impact our relationships with partners and our reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Neighbourhood Plans have been launched, will be reviewed annually and progress will be formally monitored quarterly • Neighbourhood Inspections will be completed as a minimum of once per quarter • Annual self-assessment against the Regulatory Standards • Monitoring of operational PI's

This policy also has links to the following risks:

- GOV 02 Regulator Relationship
- GOV 06 Stakeholder Relationship
- GOV 12 Reputational Damage
- ST 01 Asset Management
- SD 08 Neighbourhood and Communities Service Standard

4.2 Key Risk Indicators and Control Limits

Key risk indicators for this policy would be customer satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood including formal complaints and any associated regulatory concerns. There is also a risk that failure to deliver this policy could impact our relationship with partners and stakeholders.

5 Regulatory & Legislative Compliance

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Management Policy links to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Neighbourhood and Community Standard. This standard sets out that housing providers should have a policy for neighbourhood management, demonstrating our commitment to working with our partners to maintain high standards across our neighbourhoods and ensuring that they are clean, safe and secure.

6 Links to Other Key Documents

6.1 Related documents are relevant to this policy include:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tree Safety Policy

7 Governance of this Policy

Equality and Diversity	This policy has been internally Equality Impact Assessed. The areas highlighted included ensuring the policy references support for customers with a disability or vulnerability that may need it and also ensuring that we provide updates in a variety of ways that meet the needs of all customers.
Financial and Links to VfM	This does not have a significant financial impact, however the impact of this policy should minimise costs to Cobalt for management of our neighbourhoods through proactive inspections and ensuring where appropriate costs are passed to either third party (if appropriate) or customers (in cases of deliberate damage).
Privacy and Data Protection	N/A
Health and Safety	The management of our neighbourhoods and communal areas ensures that they are safe for customers and colleagues.
Development and Consultation	<p>The Neighbourhood Management Policy has been developed with our customers and colleagues. We have consulted with our customers through a series of face to face consultation events in our core neighbourhoods during May 2023. Our Tenant Consultative Panel have met to review this policy and also we have shared this policy with our wider customer base through our 'My Voice Matters' our digital engagement platform.</p> <p>Customers were broadly supportive of this policy, it's approach and objectives.</p> <p>Key internal colleagues have had input into the development of this policy and teams that will be responsible for delivering this policy updated.</p>
Customer Profiles and Accessing Services Data	N/A
Monitoring and Review	Our performance in relation to our Neighbourhood Plan delivery will be reported to our Homes and Neighbourhoods Committee and our Tenant Consultative Panel on a quarterly basis.
Roles & Responsibility	<p>Head of Governance - any required interaction with the Regulator.</p> <p>Head of Housing - reviewing this policy as and when relevant legislation changes and communicating this policy to key teams, customers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Operational Managers - delivery of the policy/associated procedures.</p>

8 Definitions

8.1 Definitions included in this policy and who they apply to:

Customers - refers to Cobalt tenants and leaseholders.

Communal areas - refers to internal and/or external areas that benefit more one than one property.