



NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY



1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy explains how we ensure that Red Kite manages its neighbourhoods and communal areas making sure they are clean, safe, liveable, comfortable, and well managed. We strive to provide excellent services for communities, and we want neighbourhoods to be places where current and future tenants and leaseholders want to live. The way we manage neighbourhoods directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by communities.
- 1.2 We will work in partnership with our tenants, leaseholders and local agencies and partners to
 - provide safe environments,
 - prevent and manage anti-social behaviour
 - promote community engagement to deliver sustainable communities.
- 1.3 Red Kite homes are located throughout the Wycombe area in Buckinghamshire and South Oxfordshire. The area contains a mixture of urban and rural locations. As a result, many neighbourhoods have a large tree population, and the landscape is often rolling. This policy addresses those aspects of neighbourhood management that are specific to the areas in which we own homes.
- 1.4 These neighbourhoods can be defined estates, groups of homes with shared external or internal areas, or ad hoc roads or pockets of land that we own. We recognise that our neighbourhoods are diverse and so our approach to neighbourhood management reflects the individual requirements of the homes, communal areas, and associated land in an area.
- 1.5 Many of the services provided within neighbourhoods and communal areas will be service chargeable, meaning that we will seek a contribution from tenants in and around the area to pay for the costs. For more information, see our Tenant Service Charges Policy.
- 1.6 Our neighbourhood management Policy has been written having regard to our vision and values, relevant legislation, and best practice.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to Red Kite Community Housing.
- 2.2 Grounds maintenance of communal areas: can be described as the cutting and maintenance of grassed areas, the maintenance of shrubs, hedges, bushes and weed control of all hard and soft areas.
- 2.3 Estate: an area of homes and communal spaces that make up one larger area, which may also include homes which are not owned by us.
- 2.4 Block: A block of flats with shared internal and/or external areas where the freehold is owned by us.





2.5 Communal areas: spaces shared by more than one home such as landings, hallways, gardens, garage blocks and open green spaces or parks.

3. **Responsibilities**

- 3.1 The Head of Community is responsible for ensuring that our neighbourhoods are well managed and desirable places to live.
- 3.2 The Assistant Director of Finance is responsible for ensuring that contractual services are delivered to meet the objectives of this policy.
- 3.3 All staff are responsible for identifying and resolving issues within our neighbourhoods so that the policy can be adhered to.
- 3.4 Tenants (including contractors) are also responsible for looking after their neighbourhoods and reporting any concerns they have.
- 3.5 Buckinghamshire Council (Wycombe Area) (BC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) have specific responsibilities including waste and recycling, planning and environmental health, all of which have a significant impact on neighbourhoods. All our staff are expected to build and maintain positive and proactive relationships with external partners including BC & SODC to help us to achieve well-maintained neighbourhoods.
- 3.6 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head of Community and the Assistant Director-Finance unless there are changes in legislation or regulation or because of learning which materially affects the contents of this policy.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1 The Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard (As of April 2024) requires registered providers, in consultation with residents, to publish a policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes including:
 - "Take all reasonable steps to ensure safety of shared spaces".
 - "Co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing".
- 4.2 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 sets the Government expectation that all social housing residents can enjoy good neighbourhoods and access to green space.
- 4.3 Red Kite is contractually obligated to maintain the homes and places under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and Housing Act 1988.
- 4.4 We will also work with local authorities to manage environmental matters under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.



5. Key Principles

- 5.1 To have neighbourhoods that Red Kite, tenants and the community are proud of.
- 5.2 To ensure we have clear standards so that tenants know what to expect from our service.
- 5.3 To ensure our services deliver value for money.
- 5.4 To maintain a regular, visible presence on our estates e.g. estate inspections.
- 5.5 To ensure we comply with all Health & Safety requirements.
- 5.6 To support and encourage tenants to take responsibility for their environment and neighbourhood.
- 5.7 To take a robust approach to environmental crime which includes fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned cars, and dog mess.

6. Policy Statement

6.1 Grounds maintenance

- a. We will work alongside tenants and leaseholders to design a specification that always delivers a grounds maintenance service to an agreed standard. Our contract will ensure that borders and shrub areas are looked after according to the plant species and are weed and litter free, that grassed areas are cut as appropriate during the different seasons and hard landscaped areas are free of debris.
- b. We will publish (digitally) a leaflet with pictures of the contractual standards so that all tenants know the standard they should expect. Our contracts will be procured following a recommendation by the tenant-led Core Procurement Group.
- c. We encourage tenants and leaseholders to play an active role in monitoring the quality of service delivered. Tenant and leasehold representatives will assist us to manage our contractual relationship by attending meetings with our suppliers.

6.2 **Trees**

- a. We will actively manage our existing tree population, ensuring that sector best practice guidelines and legislation are always followed.
- b. We will hold a register of all trees owned in communal areas and have a planned tree management programme in place. A risk management approach will inform the frequency of inspection and surveys.
- c. Where we identify that a tree is dead, dying, diseased, dangerous or potentially damaging, we will carry out work to ensure that it poses no risk to the general





public or homes. We aim to maintain a healthy tree population, so we will not carry out work for aesthetic or light restriction reasons only.

- d. On occasion, we may have to remove an established tree, but we will not do this unnecessarily. We will consider replacing the tree, so our tree management approach is sustainable.
- e. We may inspect and undertake works to trees in tenant's or leaseholder's gardens where they pose a possible health and safety risk or are damaging the home. Generally, the maintenance of trees in tenants' and leaseholders' gardens is the responsibility of the tenant or leaseholder and this is normally specified in the tenancy or lease agreement. We will recharge for work we have to carry out in line with our recharge policy.

6.3 Cleaning

- a. We will ensure that the communal areas of our sheltered schemes, blocks, estates, and neighbourhoods are clean, liveable, safe, and comfortable. We also expect our tenants to play their part in keeping their neighbourhoods clean by disposing of unwanted items responsibly.
- b. Cleaning can be described as keeping internal and external communal areas swept, mopped and free from litter and graffiti.
- c. By working alongside our tenants and leaseholders we have designed a specification that always delivers a service to our agreed standard. We have published a leaflet with pictures of the contractual standards so that all tenants can check the standard is as we all expect. Our contracts will be procured following a recommendation by the Procurement Group.
- d. We often use a contractor to deliver a cleaning service for us but in some neighbourhood's tenants and leaseholders have told us that they wish to deliver the service themselves. We will work with those communities who chose to deliver the service themselves and will consult before re-introducing a contractual service. However, there may be times where we choose to impose such a service even if the majority are not in favour, for instance if the standard is regularly below agreed expectations.
- e. We will encourage tenants and leaseholders to play an active role in monitoring the quality of service delivered. Involved tenants and leaseholders will assist us to manage our contractual relationship by attending meetings with our suppliers and ensure our legal obligations are discharged.
- f. We expect dog owners 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.

6.4 Environmental crime including fly tipping

a. We take a robust approach to environmental crime, and we will work in partnership with local enforcement agencies, which could include legal action





against those committing such crimes on our land, for example fly tipping. We take such issues seriously and will ensure these are dealt with quickly. Such items spoil the environment for other tenants and can be dangerous as well as unsightly.

b. The cost of removing such items on our land increases our business costs and ultimately will be paid for by tenants and leaseholders. If we can establish who is responsible, the person will be asked to remove the items. If they do not do so within the timescale, we have given them, we will arrange for the removal of the items and recharge those concerned for the whole cost of this service. Where these recharges are not paid, the individual/s concerned will be pursued for the costs, which may include legal action and costs where appropriate.

6.5 Play areas

- a. Where we own play areas, we will ensure that they are safe to use, properly inspected and fit for purpose.
- b. Our play areas and equipment are designed and installed in compliance with statutory requirements, legislation, and design standards.
- c. We will carry out or nominate an independent suitably qualified body to regularly inspect and risk-assess play areas and equipment that we own according to the relevant legislation.
- d. We will ensure that all play area equipment is maintained in the appropriate condition using a combination of planned preventive maintenance and responsive repairs.

6.6 **Parking**

- a. Many homes are in areas where demand for parking spaces is now greater than the supply. Our approach is to encourage responsible parking so that as many people can benefit from the spaces we have.
- b. Our tenancy agreements have specific clauses related to parking which tenants must adhere to.
- c. All vehicles on Red Kite land must be taxed, insured, and have a valid MOT. We consider vehicles parked on our land that do not meet these requirements to be causing a nuisance. Caravans, boats, trailers, large commercial vehicles and vehicles which have been completely covered are also prohibited from being parked on our land. We will take action to remove them in accordance with our procedures and permit other authorised bodies to deal with these nuisances where we do not have the statutory right to do so.

We do not permit SORN registered vehicles on our land, including car parks and garage forecourts. This does not apply to a private driveway which is part





of an individual home. Cars in gardens that are eyesores or appear abandoned are not permitted and we will take further action as appropriate if this occurs.

- d. We have some areas where we have installed barriers, gates, or bollards to restrict parking. Although we recognise that for some individuals this can make access more difficult, for example if they have several visitors during the day or have mobility difficulties, we will balance the needs of the individual against those of the wider community.
- e. We will consult before introducing any parking service that will involve additional charges for tenants. However, there may be times where we choose to impose such a service even if the majority are not in favour, for instance if the parking is a safety issue, if our facilities are being regularly abused and we need to secure them, or the resources we are using to manage the complaints and issues impact us financially.
- f. Value for money is an essential consideration for us, and expenditure on parking facilities is not a key priority although we appreciate the benefits it can bring in terms of convenience for our tenants.
- g. We do not normally designate communal parking spaces to individual residents except at some new build schemes where the parking bay is shown on a plan attached to the tenancy agreement. On most of our estate our spaces are communal and available to all of our tenants and their visitors, although those marked for blue badge holders are only available for those who are eligible.
- h. We will not normally intervene in parking disputes between tenants unless someone is in breach of their tenancy due to the way they are using the parking facility, the way they are behaving towards other tenants (e.g., where their actions are serious enough as to cause alarm and distress to others) or they are abusing the facility due to multiple vehicle ownership. In these instances, we will encourage tenants to use a mediation service.
- i. Whilst we see the positive impact on the environment of electric vehicles, we do not permit tenants to install charging points on and/or to trail charging cables across any communal land due to the health & safety risk this poses. Instead, we encourage tenants to use publicly available charging points. In the case of tenants having their own driveway they can request permission to install a charging point within the boundaries of the home.

6.7 **Communal repairs including lighting**

- a. All our staff have a duty in the course of their day-to-day work when they are out and about in our neighbourhoods to note any communal repairs and issues, particularly those which pose a threat to health and safety and to report them promptly.
- b. We are responsible for lampposts, security lighting and other external lighting on some of our estates, while on others the local authority is responsible. We





will maintain the lighting we are responsible for and will replace bulbs and fixtures as appropriate. We will report defective lighting on our estates to the relevant authority where we are not responsible, and we will expect our tenants, leaseholders, contractors, and partners to also report defective lamps when they notice them and ensure that identified works are completed on a timely basis by the relevant authority.

- c. Our neighbourhoods include a variety of features including service roads, footpaths, riverbanks and two bridges.
- d. When our staff are in these areas they will investigate any problems, they find in relation to issues such as fly tipping, abandoned cars and the parking of caravans, boats, and trailers without permission.

6.8 **External Structures including satellite dishes and CCTV**

- a. Tenants and leaseholders must seek permission from us before erecting anything on the side of their home or in the garden. All requests must comply with planning or other statutory regulations applicable.
- b. We will not unreasonably withhold permission to erect any structures but will consider the appearance of the area and how neighbours will be affected.
- c. At our blocks, we provide communal satellite facilities and will not agree to tenants or leaseholders installing their own dishes. If tenants or leaseholders wish to provide their own satellite service, we advise to install a cable or wireless based service.
- d. If tenants or leaseholders would like to install any form of CCTV (see clause 6.8 e below on installation first), including smart doorbells, they do not need permission from us (notwithstanding clauses 6.8 f and g). Please consider the privacy of neighbours and avoid capturing footage of them in their home or garden. For additional information, we strongly suggest tenants and leaseholders familiarise themselves with our CCTV policy (Red Kite tenant use) and relevant data protection legislation in relation to your responsibilities.
- e. Installation within this policy is defined as an action by the tenant that **will not** affect or damage the fabric of the building e.g. no drilling into walls, doors, doorframes, windows, or window frames (this is not an exhaustive list). Most, if not all smart doorbells can be affixed using sticky pads which are removeable with no damage created to the tenant's home or building fabric.
- f. If living in a flat, tenants and leaseholders must not attach anything, including smart cameras or doorbells to the front door or the doorframe, they must only attach these to their nearest wall. Front doors and doorframes in flats are specially installed and are a key protection against fire. Screwing anything into them could seriously impact their effectiveness during a fire.
- g. We will not normally install CCTV in our communal areas. Tenants and leaseholders in blocks of flats must not install communal CCTV or dummy





camera systems into any internal or external communal areas, without prior permission, (not including tenants/leaseholders own front door area/immediate surrounding wall area).

6.9 Signage

- a. We will ensure that signage on estates is clear, necessary, appropriate, and well maintained.
- b. We will ensure that health and safety and other mandatory signage is present where required.
- c. We will avoid unnecessary signage and will remove outdated and obsolete signage. We will generally not put-up signage such as 'no ball games' as this is not enforceable and we support outdoor activities for young people.
- d. Whilst we may install "no parking" signage where problems have occurred, we cannot manage irresponsible parking by members of the public and may refer individuals to the local authority or police service.

6.10 Snow/leaf clearance

- a. In winter months we are unable to prevent a build-up of leaves but will look to ensure that any build-up does not pose a slip hazard on pathways.
- b. We are generally unable to grit and clear snowfalls/ice from neighbourhoods as this would not be practical nor affordable. Tenants are responsible for gritting or clearing snow on any sole or shared pavements to their homes should they wish to do so. We will prioritise snow clearance and gritting of our sheltered housing schemes and aged persons dwellings (APD's) above other estates and neighbourhoods, where it is possible and practical to do so.
- c. We will ensure that grit bins on estates are replenished so that grit is available for our tenants and leaseholders to use.
- d. We will work with the local authority to encourage regular replenishment of grit bins on the public highway in neighbourhoods where we own houses.

6.11 **Neighbourhood improvements**

- a. We have an amount set aside for neighbourhood and environmental improvements. Tenants, leaseholders, and the wider community are encouraged to submit proposals for consideration to our tenant led Environmental Improvement Group.
- b. Tenants and leaseholders will be encouraged to participate in our Environmental Improvement Group. The group will consider whether each proposal meets tenants' priorities, addresses environmental, sustainability and biodiversity aims and has consideration of and provides for ongoing operating and maintenance costs and whether it fits with our strategic vision and plans.



6.12 Estate inspections

- a. Our team of Community Specialists work within our neighbourhoods. In addition to their routine visits we will have a programme of estate inspections.
- b. We will publish our programme of inspections on our website, and we encourage tenants, leaseholders, and other local stakeholders to attend and participate.
- c. We will also visit each of our blocks regularly on a risk assessed basis to identify and resolve any health and safety issues so that our neighbourhoods are a safe place to live.
- d. Tenants and leaseholders are not allowed to cause damage or store any item in a communal area. We will try to identify the owner of any item left in a communal area without permission but will remove the item ourselves if the owner cannot be found and the item is a safety concern. Likewise, we will make good any serious damage in a communal area. In both instances, we will recharge the tenant or leaseholder where we know it was a specific household in-line with our Recharges Policy.

6.13 Security and Anti-social behaviour

- a. We will work with tenants and leaseholders to reduce crime, nuisance, and anti-social behaviour on our estates. We will do this through improving physical security, supporting, and promoting local initiatives, and taking enforcement or prosecution action where appropriate.
- b. We will work closely with local police safer neighbourhood teams, the fire service, and other partners. Our ASB policy has more details regarding our approach to safety and security in our neighbourhoods.
- c. All communal entries to our blocks and schemes will have secure locks and keys or fobs will only be issued to tenants, leaseholders, Red Kite staff and our contractors.

6.14 **Tenant and leaseholder involvement**

- a. As a tenant led, charitable housing organisation, tenants and leaseholders inspire and influence everything we do. We work alongside them to define standards, they select who delivers the service, they assist in monitoring and managing contractor performance and they drive future improvements in our neighbourhoods.
- b. We have consulted our involved tenants and leaseholders on this neighbourhood management policy and will involve them in any reviews and future policy development.
- c. Tenants, leaseholders, and the wider community are encouraged to submit proposals for consideration to our tenant led Environmental Improvement Group.





- d. We will operate a "*Champion's Initiative*" <u>Red Kite Champions Red Kite</u> <u>Community Housing (redkitehousing.org.uk)</u> to encourage tenants and leaseholders to provide us with monthly feedback about the quality of services provided to the neighbourhood.
- e. We will survey a sample of our tenants regularly on the quality of the services we provide in the neighbourhood as part of our customer satisfaction survey. Satisfaction information will be reported to senior management.
- f. Members of our Procurement Group are central to appointing suppliers which deliver services to our neighbourhoods, and they or other tenant volunteers are involved in ongoing contract management.

6.15 **Partnership Working**

- a. We recognise that high quality sustainable neighbourhoods can only be achieved if organisations work together. We are committed to developing positive working relationships with agencies such as local authorities, neighbourhood police, other housing providers and other partners so that we can realise the potential in our communities.
- b. Unauthorised use of our land under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994: Section 61 would allow the Police to move Travellers or trespassers off our land immediately who are causing, or likely to cause the environment damage or significantly impact or if persons are being endangered. If the police are unable to act, we can begin trespass proceedings through the court to reclaim our land.
- c. We will expect our tenants and leaseholders to take responsibility for working with us in ensuring that the standards on our estates and communal areas remain high, for instance by keeping their own gardens clear and tidy, protecting the local environment, removing their rubbish, not causing nuisance with fire, keeping their pets under control, being respectful of others, not causing noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour, not storing belongings inappropriately etc.
- d. We will take the opportunity when it arises through development and regeneration to ensure good design, so we can design-out problems where appropriate, in consultation with partners, tenants and leaseholders and the wider community.

6.16 Neighbour and neighbourhood relationships

- a. Most common complaints or disputes can be resolved amicably between neighbours. In the first instance, we encourage our tenants and leaseholders to speak to their neighbour to resolve the concern before escalation to Red Kite.
- b. **Appendix 1** is a matrix of common complaints (not exhaustive), along with various resolution considerations we can suggest and action, as the landlord or a combination of the two working in partnership.





- c. The following referenced sections guide our approach as a landlord regarding good neighbour relationships across this policy:
 - i. 6.6 A I Deals with our approach to parking
 - ii. 6.11 Deals with our Environmental Improvement Group
 - iii. 6.12 Related to Estate Inspections regime
 - iv. 6.13 A C Our approach to Anti-Social Behaviour
 - v. 6.14 A F Our approach to Tenant involvement
 - vi. 6.15 A D Our approach to partnership working

7. References

- The Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard (2024).
- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- The Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on Noise Complaints time to be heard 2022

8. Related Policies & Procedures

- Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Asset Management Strategy
- Items in Communal Areas Procedure
- Mobility Scooters in Sheltered Schemes Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Tenant Service Charges Policy
- CCTV Policy (Red Kite Group use)
- CCTV Policy (Red Kite tenant use)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Abandoned or Unauthorised Vehicles Procedure
- Communal Health and Safety and Building Inspections Procedure
- Environmental Improvement Group Application Procedure
- Recharges Policy



Appendix 1 – Matrix of common complaints and potential resolutions:

| Complaint | Resolution options | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Parking disputes, including neighbour blocking driveway, inconsiderate parking, multiple vehicles per household. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> <u>https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/asb/asb/antisocial-behaviour/nuisance-parking/</u> Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to 'Alternative 2 Conflict' (Bucks Meditations new name) Good Neighbour Card | | | |
| Noise, including one off parties, differences in lifestyle, doors slamming, dogs barking, loud appliances. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) Red Kite Community Housing can consider if a repair would resolve the issue, e.g. soft closer on door, repairing floorboards. Suitable floor coverings including underlay Soundproofing rubber mats under washer/dryers Good Neighbour Card | | | |
| Children & youths, including children kicking balls, children playing loudly, youths congregating. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Good Neighbour Card Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) Red Kite Community Housing provide parks and play areas specifically for children & youths. | | | |
| Hedges, trees & boundaries. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Good Neighbour Card. Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) | | | |
| Pet nuisance, including noisy pets & excrement, neglect of pets. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Good Neighbour Card Report to Buckinghamshire Council <u>https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/environmental-health-and-nuisance/dog-control/</u> Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) Report to the RSPCA | | | |
| Lifestyle & cultural differences, including shift | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Good Neighbour Card. | | | |



| workers, food & cigarette smells, religious celebrations. | Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) |
|---|---|
| Poor standards of communal & bin areas such as litter, flytipping & graffiti. | Obtain photos & refer to Red Kite Community Housing Estates Team who can work in partnership with our Environmental Improvement Group to make positive changes to the area, in conjunction with our Contract Management Team. <u>https://redkitehousing.org.uk/supporting-communities/community- funding/environmental-improvement-group/</u> |
| Complaints caused by disabilities & or neurodiversity. | <u>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-resolve-neighbour-disputes/talk-to-your-neighbour</u> Good Neighbour Card Red Kite Community Housing can make a referral to Alternative 2 Conflict (Bucks Meditations new name) Referral to Occupational Therapist Red Kite to review suitable housing options and consider vulnerabilities/ safeguarding concerns |



| Document Controls | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Version | 5 | Effective date | 01 July 2024 | | |
| Subject matter expert drafter | Estates Manager | Process owner | Head of Community | | |
| Related Pod | Community Relationships Finance (Contract Management) | Related Policy | Mobility Scooters in Sheltered Schemes Policy Feedback Policy Repairs Policy Tenancy Policy Tenant Service Charges Policy CCTV Policy (Red Kite Group use) CCTV Policy (Red Kite tenant use) Health and Safety Policy Recharges Policy | | |
| Review period | 3 years | Next review due by | June 2027 | | |
| Delegated approvals | | | | | |
| Approved by ELT | Sarah Mei Ying North, Director of Customer Services | Approved Date | 01 July 2024 | | |
| Approved by Board/ Committee/ RRT | | Approved Date | | | |