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## Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Aim of Policy
3. Definition
4. Implementation of Nehemiah of Neighbourhood Improvement Policy
5. Consultation
6. How to prioritise Neighbourhood Improvement
7. Community Involvement
8. Value for Money
9. Partnership Working
10. Maintaining and Monitoring buildings and local areas
11. Data Protection and Information Exchange
12. Responsible Person
13. Monitor and Review
14. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements
15. Regulatory framework
16. Customer Insight
17. Links to other Policies

## 1. Policy Statement

We are committed to working with the local community to make joint decisions that impact the environment of their neighbourhoods. By working together, we aim to ensure that our corporate objectives align with and support the sustainable development and well-being of the communities we serve.

Nehemiah's Neighbourhood Improvement Policy ensures that we are consistent about the way in which we carry out neighbourhood improvements and have clear standards of what tenants can expect when an improvement is carried out.

## 2. Aim of Policy

Nehemiah aims to: -

- Empower and encourage tenants to participate in and shape their neighbourhood to create places where people enjoy living.
- Ensure we combine the needs of preserving, protecting and maintaining open and green spaces with providing tenants with high quality neighbourhoods, and to fulfil our Mission Statement:

***‘To build successful, sustainable and diverse communities by providing housing and wellbeing services in a culturally sensitive way to our current and our future customers’***

## 3. Definition

**What is a neighbourhood improvement?**

A neighbourhood improvement is a physical improvement to an area that improves the quality of that area, either visually and/or by solving a problem.

It can relate to a piece of land managed by Nehemiah or a communal area in our schemes. The proposals may mean a new use for an area or could mean an improvement to what is already there. For example:

- Street lighting
- Landscaping
- Planting trees/shrubs/flowers etc.
- Improving access

## 4. Implementation of Nehemiah of Neighbourhood Improvement Policy

**What can all Tenants expect when we carry out a neighbourhood improvement in their area?**

At the start of a neighbourhood improvement in your area, we will:

- Agree with tenants in the neighbourhood the style and frequency of consultation and communication throughout the project
- Agree with individual tenants who wish to become involved, ways of doing so that suits their circumstances
- Report the outcome of consultation back to the community in a clear and timely manner
- Provide practical support to enable participation throughout the project. For example, transport or travel cost
- Agree with tenants any future maintenance that will be required, the frequency and who is responsible

## **How does Nehemiah decide when a neighbourhood improvement is needed?**

Our tenants are at the forefront of identifying when a neighbourhood improvement is needed. Ideas for neighbourhood improvements can come from a variety of sources:

- Estate inspections, consulting with tenants at tenant meetings and Nehemiah staff, and Officers from other organisations who may have identified the need for an improvement.
- As a response to a particular issue or problem facing a neighbourhood.
- From feedback from individual tenants.

## **5. Consultation**

### **Who will Nehemiah consult with when we carry out Neighbourhood Improvement? How will we do this?**

We will always consult with tenants and leaseholders not only in line with our statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1985 and Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 1985 (amended 2002) respectively, but also because Nehemiah strongly believe our tenants have a right to be consulted about any changes to their home or neighbourhood.

Every neighbourhood improvement is different, so who we consult with depends upon the individual improvement. Nehemiah will always consider who will be affected by both the work and the finished improvement.

As well as Nehemiah tenants and leaseholders, this often includes tenants of other landlords and owner occupiers. We actively encourage tenants to get involved and help make the decisions that will affect the improvement.

We will also consult our tenants through our Tenants Panel which is a group where tenants and Nehemiah staff will work together to discuss proposals.

For a small-scale improvement, usually only involving one type of improvement, Nehemiah usually writes to all tenants in the affected area giving them an opportunity to comment on proposals and often offering a choice of options, such as different types of fencing materials, or different locations for fixtures such as benches, or lighting.

For more complex improvements, involving more than one type of improvement, or different options about the best way for an improvement to solve a particular problem, Nehemiah will initially write to all Tenants to tell them about the proposals, and invite tenants to a meeting, usually held local to the neighbourhood where the improvement is needed.

For the largest scale improvements, a series of meetings is often needed to ensure that all the issues involved are considered before any final decisions are made.

Whatever size the improvement, we will work with the community to develop their skills to maximise the community's ability to be actively involved. This may involve providing training to tenants and sharing knowledge and expertise to enable tenants to feel fully involved and able to make decisions about the project.

We also actively seek to involve local Councillors for the area as well as partners and other interested groups in any discussions about improvement proposals.

For example, if the improvement is intended to improve the security of an area, we will involve the local Police.

## **6. How to prioritise Neighbourhood Improvement**

### **What will Nehemiah consider when deciding which neighbourhood improvements to do, and in which order?**

Before we begin any neighbourhood improvement, we need to fully understand why the request for an improvement has been made. This will help us to make sure that the proposed improvement is the best way to address the issue.

Different projects will need us to think about different information, but some of the information we will consider is:

- The views of local community
- The views of colleagues, and other partners in other agencies
- The makeup of the local community including for example, different age groups, different ethnic groups for example Black, Asian and minority, and people with disabilities.
- The nature and scale of any problems the improvement is hoping to alleviate.
- We will use information collected by measures put in place by the Regulator of Social Housing, TSM (Tenant Satisfaction Measures). The measures are grouped into five themes and include 22 measures in total, including 12 tenant perception measures (TPMs) and 10 management information (MI) measures: Keeping properties in good repair, Maintaining building safety, Respectful and helpful engagement, Effective handling of complaints, and Responsible neighbourhood management.
- Any other relevant statistical information
- The needs of tenants looking to the future
- The long-term sustainability of the proposal

Feedback from our tenants through the Satisfaction Surveys tells us that the issues that tenants are most concerned about in their neighbourhoods are:

- Secure neighbourhoods
- Having clean and tidy estates, without dog mess, litter and rubbish
- Well maintained 'green' areas including grass, bushes, hedges, and trees
- Reducing vandalism & graffiti
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Providing more facilities for children, and young people
- Reducing car crime
- Better parking provisions

Satisfaction Surveys show that Tenants in different neighbourhoods have different priorities, depending on their local circumstances. For example, Nehemiah tenants in one area may be most concerned about improving security, but feel they have adequate play facilities, while tenants in another area may not be concerned about security, but feel they have a need for improved play facilities.

To make sure we respond to tenants' concerns, projects must demonstrate that they address one or more of the issues highlighted by tenants, and that they address the issues that are a priority for tenants in their neighbourhood.

When deciding which improvements to carry out, and how they can be done, we must also consider the outcome of a site survey, which tells us if the proposals for work are appropriate and can be done within a reasonable cost. A site survey will consider the overall impact on the environment and the impact on:

- Access to the neighbourhood for both vehicles and pedestrians
- Any existing features such as slopes or dips in the land, areas of hardstanding or trees
- Any services such as street lighting, drains, or cables

## **7. Community Involvement**

### **How do we make sure all sectors of the community can get involved with, and enjoy neighbourhood improvements?**

In the past, some groups of tenants have often not had the opportunity to be involved in developing improvements.

Nehemiah are keen to change this, and make sure that all sectors of the community have the opportunity to get involved in the future.

In particular, we will make sure the following groups have the opportunity to get involved in any improvements taking place in their neighbourhood.

We will involve:

Tenants with physical disabilities and sensory loss, such as blind and deaf tenants, by:

- Making sure meetings are accessible, by holding them in buildings with appropriate access and option of virtual meetings
- Considering their needs in the design of any improvements
- Working in partnership with other agencies who have expertise working with people with particular needs,

Tenants from different cultural and religious backgrounds by:

- Ensuring any religious or cultural needs are considered when arranging meetings,
- Ensuring a translator attends meetings if required,
- Working in partnership with other agencies who have appropriate expertise working with people from different backgrounds.

In addition, we will make sure that on request we provide information to tenants throughout the project in a format of their choice. For example, in large print, another language or on tape. Please talk to us about this.

We will make sure we cater for the needs of both individuals and groups, and work with them to make sure that they are able to become fully involved.

We will also carry out an 'Equality Impact Assessment' which is an assessment to make sure that any proposals do not discriminate against sectors of the local community.

Nehemiah will also strive to ensure that our different neighbourhoods across the Boroughs we work benefit from improvements.

## **8. Value for Money**

### **How will Nehemiah make sure we make the best use of your money?**

Once an improvement is completed, Nehemiah will carry out a 'satisfaction survey' with Tenants in the neighbourhood to make sure that they are happy not only with the work that has been carried out, but also to make sure that Tenants were happy with the opportunities to get involved and help make the decisions that affected the improvement.

We will also continue to talk to Tenants after the scheme is complete to make sure we continue to learn from schemes, to make sure that any lessons can be taken forward and used to improve the way we carry out improvements in the future.

We will consult a sample of our tenant regularly on quality of service we provide in the neighbourhood as part of our customer satisfaction survey.

Tenants will be used as part of our tendering procedure when considering working with new contractors. They are central to appointing suppliers who deliver services to our neighbourhoods.

## **9. Partnership Working**

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 aspirations of our neighbourhoods.
- 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 antisocial behaviour, not storing belongings inappropriately.
- 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.

## **10. Maintaining and Monitoring buildings and local areas**

We will ensure that Nehemiah properties and where they are located on ground owned or managed by Nehemiah as the landlord:

- Conduct block inspections (internal & external) monthly for our housing for older people. We will do quarterly inspections for our general needs properties which have communal areas.
- Assess the quality of communal cleaning.
- Deal with any incidents of fly tipping.
- Manage a grounds maintenance programme for grass cutting, hedges and tree works where we are responsible for communal areas.

## **11. Data Protection and Information Exchange**

Nehemiah will make use of section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in the UK (and across the EU) on 25 May 2018. The GDPR, which replaces the Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC), aims to strengthen the security and protection of personal data in all Member States.

Nehemiah will ensure Data is processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction, or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

## **12. Responsibilities**

- The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring that our neighbourhoods are well managed and a desirable place to live.
- All staff are responsible for identifying and resolving issues within our neighbourhoods so that we can evidence we are adhering to our policy.
- Tenants, leaseholders and other customers (including contractors) are also responsible for looking after their neighbourhoods and reporting any concerns they have.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there are changes in legislation or regulation or because of learning which materially affects the contents of this policy.

## **14. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements**

**The key legislation to the neighbourhood environment is:**

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Highways Act 1980 Neighbourhood Management Policy – July 2020 Page 2 of 8
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 • Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- Law of Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Public Health Act 1936
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 /Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Neighbourhood and community Standard 2024
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 2024
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987
- Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998

## **15. Regulatory Framework**

**Neighbourhood and Community Standards:**

Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in



partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so. Neighbourhood management: Registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The policy any communal areas associated with the registered provider's homes.

## **16. Customer Insight**

The content of this Policy was created by Nehemiah customer insight and involvement data where customer priorities and activities are incorporated.

Data sources include:

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Complaints
- Estate walkabout data collected previously
- Block Inspections of communal and schemes
- Partnership and forum groups
- Compliments
- ASB cases

## **17. Link to Other Policies and Useful links**

This policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with the following Nehemiah Housing Management Policies:

- Asset Management Policy
- Repair Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Customer Engagement Strategy
- GDPR Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Recharge Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Letting Policy