Trident Group

refresh refocus renew

Neighbourhood and Community Policy

Department: Homes & Communities

Version:	V1.0
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Issue Date:	March 2025
Review Date:	March 2028
Access Reference:	Sharepoint
Staff Affected:	All Staff
Approved By:	
Lead Officer	

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Contents

Section Number	Section Name	Page Number
1.	Introduction	3 – 4
2.	Scope	5
3.	Roles and Responsibilities	5
4.	Areas of Focus	7
5.	Legislation	14
6.	Linked Policies	14
7.	Approval Control	15
Appendices		

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim of the Policy

The Aim of this policy is to outline Trident Group's approach to proactive and effective Neighbourhood Management and as an integral part of our role and responsibility to provide safe, secure and well-maintained neighbourhoods for our customers and their neighbours.

Well managed neighbourhoods provide a better quality of life for our customers and can act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance, and crime. We aim to provide high quality services, create sustainable communities, and promote pride in our neighbourhoods.

We will comply with the Regulator of Social Housings Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with our customers and external organisations and our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our commitment to maintaining and improving neighbourhoods and providing services to customers which enables them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment and neighbourhoods they are proud to live in.

This policy aims to demonstrate compliance with the following Consumer Standards under the Neighbourhoods and Communities standard:

- Safety of shared spaces
- Local cooperation

Successful implementation and management of this policy will deliver improved outcomes for both our customers and Trident Group and increase customer satisfaction through the following Tenant Satisfaction Measures:

- Satisfied that landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
- Satisfaction landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.

1.2. Policy Statement

The policy objectives are:

- To develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties and neighbourhoods.
- To ensure the grounds and communal facilities we own and manage are well maintained and that where we instruct work, it provides value for money for our customers.
- To work in cooperation with tenants, relevant organisations and partner agencies to provide environmental, social and economic wellbeing in neighbourhoods.
- To ensure that all customers are aware of their respective responsibilities.

- To ensure we continue to comply with legislation and the Regulator's Consumer Standards
- To create thriving and sustainable communities through customer-led partnership working.

1.3. Aims of Zero Tolerance

Trident Group have adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach for reasons including:

- To enable residents to enjoy a safe, clean and tidy environment.
- To reduce un-necessary risks and comply with our duties under primary legislation including fire safety laws and the Housing Act 2004; and all subsidiary legislation.
- To ensure compliance with fire authorities preferred practice of managing communal areas
- To ensure we meet our regulatory responsibilities
- To reduce the risk of accidental fires in common parts whist ensuring there is clarity in the enforcement of a zero-tolerance approach
- To aid a hazard free escape route
- To ensure there is clarity as to roles and responsibilities
- To ensure residents are kept safe and we effectively manage and address residents' concerns regarding fire safety.

1.4. Objectives of Zero Tolerance

Trident Groups objectives for adopting a 'zero tolerance approach to items in communal spaces is:

- For residents to be aware of their responsibilities and our zero-tolerance approach to communal areas.
- To have a well-defined corporate approach to keeping communal areas free from combustible materials.
- That goods left in communal areas are removed promptly, following the necessary notice procedures by taking a corporate approach that involves all departments that visit our estate / blocks / flats.
- To ensure there is no ambiguity regarding what is allowed and therefore residents know exactly what's expected / required.

2. Scope

This policy applies to customers of all tenures and sets out clear guidance for Trident Group staff and contractors in our approach to managing our neighbourhoods.

It explains our approach to managing our neighbourhoods, how we will involve customers in neighbourhood improvements and our partnership working with other agencies.

This policy links with our Service Standards and other existing policies and procedures such as Anti-Social Behaviour, Tenancy Management and Vulnerability Policy and aims to demonstrate a holistic approach to neighbourhood management, flexing the offer to the needs of our customers.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director of Housing, Care and Support and the Executive Director of Property Services will have the overall responsibility for service delivery in line with the Neighbourhood and Community Policy.

The areas of focus in this policy may cross a number of service delivery areas and additional policies and procedures. Trident Group will work collaboratively across directorates and departments to deliver the aims and objectives set out within these policies to ensure our residents and customers receive the best possible service.

The manager responsible for the individual service area should ensure that Trident Staff deliver these aims in line with all policies and guidelines. Any failure in service will be addressed in line with our Group HR policies and Complaints Policy.

3.1. Partnership Working

Keeping our neighbourhoods safe, clean, and tidy requires joint working with our customers, local authority services and other agencies. To do this we will:

- Ensure a range of opportunities for customers to be involved in the management of their neighbourhood.
- Work together with our partners, including local Councillors, the Police, Highways, other housing providers, Environmental Protection and resident groups to make neighbourhoods a safer place to live in
- Support local initiatives to improve neighbourhoods.
- Work with neighbourhood community groups to identify local priorities and improvements.
- Conduct regular inspections to communal areas and ensure that they are well maintained and comply with safety regulations.
- Maintain hard and soft landscaped areas owned by Trident Group to a high standard.
- Work closely with local Police and other services to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime.
- Conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks, promptly removing obstructions in line with the fire safety policy.

We expect customers to act responsibly in their neighbourhoods and to adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement or lease. We will signpost to required support to resolve an issue or use enforcement measures as a last resort.

3.2 Housing Officers and Customer Engagement Team

Our Homes and Communities colleagues will complete regular visits to our neighbourhoods as part of their work in the community so that we can ensure local neighbourhoods are being looked after and to also identify any problems that need to be addressed.

The frequency of these visits will be determined on an individual basis and based on the regular assessment of a range of factors, including:

- Reports of anti-social behaviour
- The level and cost of services delivered
- The level of complaints and reported repairs.
- The extent and condition of communal facilities, including any reports of damage and poor aesthetic quality.
- Poorly kept gardens
- Type of properties including number of high-rise blocks

Our Customer Engagement Team will work alongside all stakeholders including the Estates Team to ensure Trident Group's visibility in our communities, building relationships with our customers and ensuring neighbourhood issues are identified and dealt with swiftly. There will be planned Neighbourhood Walks across all of our stock resulting in reports and Action Plans that are reported as part of our Key Performance Indicators and Committee reports.

3.3 Other Agencies Responsibilities

Where issues are identified or reported on estates that are not the responsibility of Trident Group, customers will be advised to report the issue directly to the relevant organisation. For example, to the Police, Environmental Health, managing agents or the local authority highways.

3.4 Estate Services

We will provide a range of services either directly or through contractors. The cost of these services will be recovered via local service charges or personal charges as appropriate. Services provided include (but are not limited to):

- Grounds Maintenance
- Tree management
- Communal cleaning & window cleaning
- Parking management
- Key/Access fob management.
- Health and Safety compliance checks
- Scheme Risk Assessments
- Play area inspections (Where we are responsible for play areas)

- Waste management.
- Graffiti removal.
- Winter Gritting (At Selected Sites)

All contracts and instructed work will be robustly monitored by the Estates Team, with any issues of underperformance investigated and remedied.

Contracts will be reviewed and re-tendered at least every 5 years. When procuring new contracts, we will review specifications using customer feedback and ensure that customers have the opportunity to scrutinise the procurement process.

Our network of Neighbourhood Champions will help us to monitor the delivery of the services and provide local feedback.

4. Areas of Focus

4.1. Communal Areas

Customers who pass through an internal communal area to access their home or have use of an external communal area shall be responsible for ensuring that they, their visitors, and household members abide by their tenancy and leasehold conditions.

Customers must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited. Smoking is not allowed in any internal communal area. Customers must also not interfere or cause damage to any door entry system, security, or safety equipment.

Everyone living in a building with a controlled door entry system are expected to use the system correctly by keeping the entrance door shut at all times and only allowing access to identified visitors to their home. Furthermore, customers must ensure that no damage or vandalism occurs to any features of communal areas.

We will investigate all instances of damage and vandalism and will work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action, please refer to the Anti- Social Behaviour Policy. We will visit each communal area as part of our health and safety compliance schedule to inspect communal areas for items and damage.

We will ensure the good condition of flooring within internal communal areas, replace, and repair where necessary, and recover this cost through the service charge.

4.2 Fire Safety / Fire Risk

The Regulatory Reform Order (fire) (2005) requires every block of flats to undergo a fire safety risk assessment. This applies to common parts and is an obligation on the landlord. We will ensure that every communal area is covered by a fire risk assessment. We will visit each communal area every two weeks to ensure it is free of hazards and that we are complying with the fire risk assessment please see the Fire Safety Operational Procedures for further information.

Due to potential dangers of obstructing access or means of escape in the event of a fire, we will operate a zero-tolerance approach to items left in a communal area. If any high-risk items (e.g., mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel

engine.) are found, the customer who owns the items will be contacted and asked to remove the item immediately. Failure to do so would be seen as a breach of tenancy and would be treated as a serious risk to other customers, and the item may be removed by Trident Group immediately.

Other items will be carded and/or a sticker placed on them requesting removal within 7 days and will be removed and disposed of if they are still there after this time, and customers will not be eligible for compensation for loss of items under this process. Repeated failure of a customer to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of their agreement with us and dealt with by the Neighbourhood teams. All avenues for resolving matters will be utilised including tenancy support and legal remedies. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where there are extenuating circumstances.

Bonfires, BBQ's and Fireworks are not permitted in/on any communal area owned by Trident Group. Use of bonfires, BBQ's and fireworks for individual homes must be carried out and used in accordance with the Local Authorities protocol; information can be found on their website.

4.3 Neighbourhood Improvements

Neighbourhood improvements are planned works to the communal areas which are intended to enhance the local environment.

Neighbourhood improvements will be prioritised based on several factors such as (but not limited to):

- Available budget
- Customer need/consultation
- Feedback from customers and/or community groups including TSM results
- Impact on the neighbourhood
- Impact of issues such as ASB/fly tipping/fire safety

Our contractors offer to deliver improvements as part of their commitments to social value.

We will also consider requests from residents' groups to use areas of land for small-scale gardening projects and may provide support for such projects. However, this may come at a cost to residents that could be reflected within their service charges.

Decisions on priorities for neighbourhood improvements are discussed on an ad-hoc basis.

4.3.1 Grounds Maintenance

The grounds maintenance specification and maps showing the hard and soft landscaped areas maintained by Trident Group will be made available to customers on request. The service level will be site specific and may be varied following resident consultation.

4.3.2 Tree Management

All trees on land owned by Trident Group will be assessed at least once every five years by suitably qualified staff or contractors. We will carry out a programme of works to manage the

risks posed by trees to an acceptable level, balancing this against the many benefits that trees provide.

4.3.3 Communal Cleaning & Window Cleaning

All schemes with internal communal areas and communal windows will have a cleaning specification clearly defining the standards and frequency of work; this will be available to all interested parties and reviewed on a regular basis. This work will be carried out either by contractors or directly employed staff.

We will manage the performance of cleaning contractors and staff through regular inspections and contract reviews.

4.3.4 Waste Management - Refuse, Recycling, Bin Stores and Fly Tipping

We will work closely with local authorities to ensure that neighbourhoods have the appropriate facilities for disposing of rubbish and recycling. Where Trident Group own and manage communal bin stores we will ensure that these are kept clean and tidy as part of the cleaning specification.

Excessive build-up of waste or contamination of recycling will be removed by contractors and re-charged to the scheme or block. Where there are repeated issues with bin stores, we will engage with residents to identify perpetrators and/or look for solutions in partnership with the Local Authority

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of rubbish, and we treat this problem very seriously as it is visually unpleasant and can cause safety risks. Where fly tipping is on our land, we will remove it. The cost of removing fly tipping may be recharged to individuals where they can be identified, or to the scheme or block via a service charge. Large amounts of fly tipping will be investigated by the Housing Officer to try and identify the source so that action can be taken, such as tenancy breach remedies or requesting an investigation through Environmental Health.

Where fly tipping is on other land, we will report it to the local authority or relevant landowner where appropriate.

4.3.5 Vandalism and graffiti

Vandalism and graffiti to Trident Group owned property are not acceptable. We want all customers and staff to report graffiti and vandalism if noticed. Where there is a Health and Safety risk, repair works are carried out within 24 hours. We aim to complete all other repairs within five working days.

All graffiti of a directly personal nature and in breach of Anti-social behaviour policy will be removed within 24 hours of notification. We aim to remove all other graffiti within five days of notification.

All incidents of vandalism and graffiti are recorded. We will investigate and endeavour to identify the perpetrator, prosecuting in partnership with other agencies such as the police where evidence allows.

4.3.6 Winter Gritting

We will provide a gritting service or stock of grit (rock salt) at a select number of sites identified by managers as posing a higher risk. The list of sites will be made available on request.

4.3.7 Vehicles and Parking

We do not hold waiting lists or charge for parking. We operate a consistent 'first come, first served' approach to parking in Trident Group owned parking areas where spaces are not allocated.

We are unable to respond to specific requests for parking but in recognition of the challenges for customers living with disabilities. We will aim to allocate parking bays for customers who hold a blue badge. At elected schemes, there are already specific parking bays.

We may appoint a reputable company to operate a parking scheme, or parking maintenance, in our neighbourhoods to ensure the effective management/control of parking spaces, facilities, gates or barriers. This is the solution we will seek where parking has become challenge; we are not able to get involved in disputes regarding parking and charges between the customer and the contractor. The performance and review of these contractors are reviewed in line with the terms within the contract. Complaints regarding unallocated parking will be excluded from the complaint's procedure, customers who have disputes with the neighbours over parking are encouraged to speak to each other and we will offer mediation as a solution if there is a dispute between neighbours.

We will work with the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to identify owners of suspected abandoned vehicles and where this is on our land, arrange for the vehicle to be removed, stored, and disposed of (if the owner does not respond after giving the required notice). Where the owner is identified we may re-charge the costs for the removal, storage and disposal of the vehicle. We will take a similar approach to abandoned trailers, caravans, boats etc.

Parking issues that are on local authority land or on the public highway will be reported by customers and staff to the Police or Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) so that they can take the appropriate action.

Where a parking space is allocated to a property regard must be given to safety, terms of the tenancy agreement, any planning restrictions should be honoured. We would not consent to customers using their driveways for accommodation purposes. Our service offer will extend to advice and mediation where there is a dispute connected to a shared driveway, where there is inappropriate parking, blocking of vehicles and damage to vehicles.

The installation of electric vehicle charging points is entirely at the discretion of Trident Group. The organisation is under no obligation to provide electric vehicle charging points purely because customers choose electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles. The locations where electric vehicle charging points are installed are based upon safety and practicality. Customers wishing to install an electric charging point in a communal car park or allocated parking space will first need to complete alterations request.

4.3.8 Satellite Dishes

All permission requests for satellite dishes must be made in writing.

We will generally permit customers living in houses to fix their own satellite dish to their home if it is installed safely in accordance with planning regulations/building control and without damaging or spoiling the condition or appearance of the property.

Permission may be refused where a property is not considered appropriate (e.g., flats where there is a communal ariel or restrictive covenant) or has undergone external refurbishment where we consider that a dish/additional aerial would damage the property. The method of construction of the home may also mean that permission is refused where the fitting of a satellite dish could damage the fabric of the building.

4.3.9 CCTV and Ring Door Bells

CCTV installed by companies, housing associations and local authorities is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations. Security systems installed by private householders, including cameras, are not covered by this legislation but the inappropriate use of privately installed CCTV may be a breach of civil law, could be considered a breach of the 2003 Sexual Offences Act (aimed at preventing voyeurism) or might be grounds for a complaint of harassment.

In conjunction with customers, we will consider proposals to install CCTV where customers themselves together with the police consider that this could improve the safety and security of an estate or area. The installation and running costs will be met through an addition to the service charge (subject to proper consultation with all affected customers). Any such installation will meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on the installation and use of CCTV published by the Office of the Information Commissioner. We do not offer a monitoring service where CCTV is installed.

We will give customers permission to install their own CCTV equipment where they can show that it will meet a need for increased security on the following conditions:

- It is a camera sited at or near the front entrance, covering that entrance or its approach only.
- The camera does not focus on neighbouring private homes, their gardens and other areas of private property.

We do not regard CCTV installation as an improvement and will not make payments under the compensation for improvements scheme.

Where customers have installed ring doorbells or similar devices at their own properties, we will advise them to ensure that they are aware of the legal implications, and that they do not invade the privacy of other. These systems are not within Trident Group's control.

Our service offer extends to mediation and advice where there is a dispute regarding CCTV camaras.

4.3.10 Pest Infestations

Customers have a responsibility to report all issues regarding vermin, pest or insect infestations to us. When a customer reports the presence of vermin, pests or insects within their house or garden, they will be advised to contact the local authority or a pest control company. Where infestations can be directly attributed to a customer's living conditions or habits, we will advise the customer on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not reoccur.

The customer will be responsible for any remedial work required to bring the property or garden up to standard to resolve and prevent infestations. Where a customer fails to meet any of the obligations to rectify any infestation, appropriate action will be taken to encourage and support the customer to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Support and advice will be offered when required where support needs and or vulnerabilities are identified. Continual failure of the customer to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement. All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging customers for works not carried out and legal remedies.

Where required we will work with the local authority to assist with any statutory nuisance arising from infestation. If an infestation occurs at a location that is identified as a common area and not part of a customers' home, we will take steps to eradicate the infestation and prevent it from reoccurring. This may involve working with customers and other residents to eliminate nearby food sources.

The response time for responding to infestations will depend on the type of infestations and the severity, however we will respond to all reports within 10 working days. Where a statutory nuisance exists, we will respond within 24 hours. We will ensure that all empty properties are free from infestations before being let which includes all external areas.

4.4 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Trident aims to ensure that residents live peacefully within their own homes and communities. We recognise that failure to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) effectively can significantly affect quality of life for our residents and customers and that dissatisfaction with the living environment can affect our ability to develop sustainable communities. Trident is committed to tackling ASB in a responsive and robust manner.

Our ASB policy is reviewed every 3 years in line with legislation and regulatory requirements to ensure that we provide the best service possible to tackle the issue. Staff also receive regular training on how to report, tackle and prevent ASB. We also commit to taking part in ASB week, where we work with residents and customers to raise awareness of ASB and what we can all do.

Our responsibility for ASB also reaches into the local community, not just our immediate homes. We will work with local communities to create sustainable, balanced communities that thrive. This policy will also allow us to take an early intervention approach to address noise within the local neighbourhood.

4.5 Domestic Abuse

Trident Group believes that Domestic Abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Domestic Abuse often has consequences for the housing situation of those affected and victims/ survivors will frequently turn to their landlords for help.

Trident Group aims to:

- Listen, believe and act on disclosure of all reported Domestic Abuse.
- Increase awareness and understanding of Domestic Abuse and its impact.
- Work alongside partner agencies and stakeholders and maintain multi-agency working to ensure a seamless service to victims/ survivors and their children and families.
- Improve the safety and welfare of adults and children who are affected.
- Hold perpetrators of abuse to account for their actions.
- Work in accordance with the Customer Domestic Abuse Policy.
- Keep updated case management systems so that all records are maintained and recorded in a confidential manner.

4.6 Pets

Trident understands that, for many people, pets are part of the family and bring a huge amount of joy and comfort to peoples lives, including improving mental and physical wellbeing. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that properties are suitable for the pet requested and seek assurance of responsible pet ownership.

We will work with all residents and customers in line with our Pet Policy to ensure that all pets are suitably looked after and appropriate for the property and local community.

We have a full commitment to this Neighbourhood and Community policy and staff will be provided with clear guidance and appropriate procedures to support all areas within this policy.

The policy will be made widely available to customers and stakeholders via an appropriate range of online and printed communication platforms.

We will review customer feedback and identify areas for service improvement on a continuous basis so that we improve the value for money of services being delivered.

The policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier where there are changes in legislation or regulations.

5. Legislation

This section will cover the Legislation under which The Trident Group have to operate.

- Social Housing Act 2023
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Vehicles (Prescribed Sums and Charges) Regulations 2008
- 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
- Neighbourhood & Community Standard (HCA, 2015)
- Occupiers Liability Acts 1957/1984
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

6. Linked / Associated Policies and Other References

Below is a list of linked or associated Trident Group documents and to which our employees, contractors and other individuals are required to comply, as appropriate:

Policies

- Anti-social behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour
- Health & Safety policies and procedures
- Fire Safety Policies and Procedures
- GDPR policies and procedures
- Vulnerability Policy
- TORT Policy
- Pet Policy
- Customer Domestic Abuse Policy

- Group HR Policies
- Complaints Policy
- Estate Management Policy

7. Approved Control

Approval Control:

Version Number:	Date:	Review Completed by	Approved By	Approved Date
1	March 2025			