



Green Spaces Maintenance Policy

SER-POL-34

Version 1.0

Date approved: 20 May 2014

Approved by: Board

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Southway Housing Trust (Southway) is located in the heart of one of the greenest areas of the city of Manchester. As a major stakeholder and land owner in the area, we recognise our role in maintaining a safe, clean and well managed public realm green space environment. This policy sets out how Southway intends to fulfil this role.
- 1.2 The policy principally concerns Southway's public realm green spaces, but it also addresses issues regarding tenants' homes and garden spaces.
- 1.3 Southway will have in place a Management Plan for all our green spaces. This will clearly and adequately address all of the above criteria and any other relevant aspects of the green space's management. This will be monitored and regularly reviewed by the Environment Manager.

2. Public Realm Green Spaces

- 2.1 In respect of our public realm green spaces Southway will maintain the following standards.

(1) A welcoming place

The overall impression on approaching and entering should be positive and inviting.

- There must be good, safe access.
- There should be good signage to and in the green space.
- Accessibility must be equal for all members of the community.

(2) Healthy, safe and secure

The space must be healthy, safe and secure for members of the community to use. Any issues that come to light must be addressed promptly and appropriately, via the Management Plan.

- Equipment and facilities must be safe to use.
- Dog fouling must be adequately addressed.
- Health and safety policies must be produced, implemented and regularly reviewed.

(3) Clean and well maintained

For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed.

- Litter and other waste must be effectively managed.
- Grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained.
- Vandalism, littering and the maintenance of such issues should be addressed in a reasonable time frame.

(4) Sustainability

Methods used in maintaining green spaces and the facilities within them should be environmentally sound, relying on current knowledge and best practice. Southway's officers will be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed.

- We should produce, implement and regularly review environmental policies or charters and management strategies.
- We will demonstrate high horticultural and arboricultural standards.
- We will minimise and justify pesticide use, eliminate horticultural peat use, and recycle waste plant material.
- We should take appropriate energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling, and resource conservation measures.

(5) Conservation and heritage

As a major stakeholder and landowner, we should use our role to conserve local green spaces and heritage to benefit the area.

- We should pay particular attention to the conservation and appropriate management of landscapes, natural features, wildlife and plants.
- These should serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment.

(6) Community involvement

Our green space management should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community who represent as many green space user groups as possible.

- We should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the user community and levels and patterns of use.

- We should be able to evidence community involvement in management and/or developments and the results achieved.
- We should provide appropriate provision levels of recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.

3. Tenants' garden space

3.1 Southway is committed to increasing our tenants' enjoyment and awareness of the value of their garden spaces. We will encourage and support our tenants to utilise and care for their garden spaces.

3.2 This work will include:

- Partnership working with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, National Trust, Landlife and Manchester City Council.
- Piloting 'Show Gardens'.
- Providing training and support to a network of interested tenants.
- Offering discounted tool hire from a local supplier.
- Offering a concessionary gardening service to tenants that need support.
- Maintaining a robust and workable approach to enforcement where gardens are kept in a poor state.
- Implementing a robust void garden process.

4. Boundary Vegetation

4.1 Much of Southway's housing has front, rear, and/or side boundaries which comprise privet hedges rather than fences. It is recognised that these hedged boundaries add to the green character of South Manchester.

4.2 Southway will maintain hedged boundaries wherever possible.

5. Trees

5.1 Southway will conduct a regular tree survey and maintain a database of the tree stock for which we are responsible. We will ensure that all trees are maintained in accordance with the recommendations of the tree survey.

5.2 The felling of trees will only be undertaken where a tree is clearly diseased or unstable, or where it is causing structural damage to property. Where a tree is felled, consideration will be given to potential replacement of that tree with another.

5.3 Work will not normally be undertaken to trees where they are claimed to be blocking light to a property or affecting television or telephone reception.

6. Invasive Species

6.1 Southway is aware of problems associated with the spread of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed in parts of South Manchester, and this plant has been found in the gardens of some of our properties.

6.2 When invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed (or similar varieties such as Himalayan Balsam) are identified on land for which Southway is responsible, we will accept responsibility for eradication of the local occurrence.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Southway will ensure consistency in contractor performance through regular meetings to ensure contract standards are maintained. It is recognised that both parties will have common objectives to:

- Ensure a pleasant and safe environment for the users and visitors to our green spaces and gardens.
- Ensure that the environment is safe and contributes to a sustainable community.
- Achieve value for money whilst delivering works to the required standard.

7.2 The locations and design of green space across our area is such that each site will need to meet its needs in a variety ways.

7.3 We will record customer satisfaction with its performance on the maintenance and upkeep of green space, and report this detail to the Executive Leadership Team through KPI production.

7.4 We will report performance regularly to tenant groups, including the Southway Resident Consultative Group, and hold quarterly Environment Service Improvement Group meetings with residents.

8. Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 The policy will help deliver actions that will benefit all parts of the community and Southway will ensure that it is applied fairly to all our customers. Some of our green spaces will be specifically designed to be accessible to people with limited mobility and other disabilities.
- 8.2 Publicity around events will be made available in accessible formats and targeted communication will be used to attract residents to outdoor events who might be less likely to attend.

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
Previous versions (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)	
V1 – ELT – July 2011 – Trees and Vegetation Policy	
Date of last EIA:	N/A
Review lead by:	David Squires
Main points or amendments made and reasons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces standards for public realm green space management • Procedural detail removed from policy to procedures 	
Next review due:	Q1 2017/18
Review level:	B – Audit and Risk Committee