

Neighbourhood Policy

2025-2029

Version control

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1. Introduction

Charnwood Borough Council ('the council', 'we', 'our') has a duty to ensure that residents living in its properties and communities experience peaceful enjoyment of their homes, and to ensure that these homes and any communal areas are safe, secure and are places that communities can take pride in. The council is committed to treating all tenants and customers with fairness and respect.

2. Objectives of this policy

The objectives of this policy are:

- To set out a consistent approach to keeping our properties and estates safe and secure;
- To align our policy on good neighbourhood management with the relevant terms and conditions set out within our combined licence and non-secure tenancy, introductory and secure tenancy agreements;
- To manage our neighbourhoods in collaboration with all council services and relevant partners to create and maintain safe, clean, attractive, prosperous, and vibrant neighbourhoods where people want to live;
- To enable us to create operational procedures that deliver this policy in a consistent manner.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to everyone living in properties owned by the council with external and internal communal areas and others who live and work around areas owned by the council and/or use such areas.

4. Policy statement

4.1 Neighbourhood management is delivered by a variety of council services and not just the landlord service for tenants and leaseholders in council-owned homes and estates.

4.2 Within the landlord service the tenancy and estate management team, in partnership with other teams within the council are responsible for ensuring that the estates that we manage are kept tidy and safe, this policy sets out Landlord Services approach to managing our estates, and the role we play in promoting social, environmental, physical and economic wellbeing.

4.2 In order to fulfil the objectives of this policy the council will:

- conduct regular estate inspections to ensure that they are well maintained, tidy and safe;
- deliver anti-social behaviour services and work with partner agencies to effectively deal with breaches of tenancy effectively that could affect our estates;
- complete monthly fire risk assessments in all our blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks;
- keep communal areas well maintained and free from rubbish/general waste, this includes internal and external communal areas associated with blocks of flats;
- deliver estate and neighbourhood maintenance and improvement programmes;
- aim to improve community cohesion and social, economic and physical wellbeing. This will be fulfilled through activities and events delivered by our customer engagement, neighbourhood management and active recreation teams and through engagement with relevant partners and initiatives.
- make new tenants aware of this policy at sign-up; and at the new tenant visit their attention will be drawn to some of the main points within the policy.

5. Our approach to neighbourhood management

- 5.1 The council has a commitment to neighbourhood management and development. It is a process which brings our local community and local service providers together at a neighbourhood and estate level to support our tenants, tackle local problems and improve local services.
- 5.2 The focus is to tailor services to local areas by recognising local priorities and identifying areas of concern. Working in partnership with tenants, community members and other service providers is a key to the success of neighbourhood management.
- 5.3 The council has a team of designated neighbourhood development officers who are based within three of the borough's priority neighbourhoods identified in the national indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) report. These areas contain high concentrations of council accommodation.
- 5.4 Acknowledging the effect of the deprivation data within the priority neighbourhood locations, the council funds and manages three community hubs (two of which are in council-owned flats) which provide a safe space for tenants to get access to support, socialise, contribute to their community and have a voice. It is recognised that tenants often feel anxious about engaging with services and the hubs provide a more comfortable and less formal place for support.
- 5.5 We recognise the importance of community voice and are committed to consultation and opportunity for tenants to have their say. We support the establishment of community and resident groups and can signpost to funding for a wide range of projects which include community gardens, play areas and outdoor gyms.

6. Partnership working

- 6.1 Teams within the landlord service work closely with other departments within the council and other external stakeholders, such as the police, social care, health and the voluntary and community sector to address problems within an area or community. We work with our larger contractors to make improvements to communal areas and other initiatives to support delivery of our aims, ensuring the contractors fulfil their social value commitments in their contracts
- 6.2 Our teams work in collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions to sustain tenancies in the landlord service and to promote general economic wellbeing in the community.

7. Health and wellbeing programmes

- 7.1 The council plays a lead role in the delivery of the Charnwood health and wellbeing partnership plan and will aim to support residents to have good physical and mental health either through direct delivery of activities, or through onward referral to partner organisations. Regular physical activity provides significant physical, mental health and social benefits. It can be an effective way to meet new people, reducing social isolation, building friendships and bringing communities together.
- 7.2 The council's 'Active Charnwood' team works closely with the landlord service customer engagement team to promote access to programmes that aim to increase levels of physical activity and support good mental health, access to our green spaces, reduction of loneliness and isolation, healthy eating, alcohol and substance misuse, and smoking reduction support. Where appropriate, sessions will take place within our hubs and other community spaces, reducing barriers to access. Relevant activities will be promoted to tenants through the residents magazine, and tenants directed to services.

8. Customer and community engagement

- 8.1 The landlord service's customer engagement team organises a range of events and creates opportunities to allow customers to provide feedback on the services we provide and to influence the services delivered. There are informal and formal options available to meet individual tenants' needs and circumstances. The full range of options can be viewed in our ['Have Your Say' leaflet](#).
- 8.2 The customer engagement team works with tenants and other stakeholders in our communities to identify projects that would improve the area where our tenants live and/or assist in creating community cohesion and reduce social isolation. Information on the types of funding available can be found on the [Customer engagement](#) pages of the council's website.

9. Estate inspections and estate walkabouts

- 9.1 We will carry out inspections of our estates on a regular basis to ensure that we can identify and deal with any potential problems. Inspections will be targeted at estates where problems are more prevalent; and details of estate inspections will be recorded and retained including any actions taken to resolve any issues identified during the inspection.
- 9.2 We will carry out estate walkabouts yearly at specific pre-agreed estates, a record will be taken of any issues identified and any actions taken. Outcomes from the estate walks will also be included in the residents magazine. Walkabouts provide an opportunity for tenants to meet officers from within the council and other agencies to discuss any issues they may have in the area.

10. Communal areas

- 10.1 The landlord service is committed to keeping communal areas safe, clean and clear of fire risks, obstructions and general waste. We will undertake regular inspections of internal and external communal areas to address any concerns raised or identified by officers. The council adopts a zero-tolerance approach to items within communal areas.
- 10.2 The landlord service will maintain its other hard-landscaped areas such as parking areas and play areas with the aim to keep them safe and fit for their intended purpose.

11. Abandoned properties and tenancy fraud

- 11.1 The landlord service understands that abandoned and empty homes can have a negative visual effect on estates and can be susceptible to vandalism and squatting. Abandoned properties can also create other problems that can affect the local area, for example the property being unkempt or in poor repair. The council will respond swiftly to reports that of a property has been abandoned and appropriate action will be taken.
- 11.2 If we become aware of tenancy fraud, for example a property being sublet without permission, we will investigate thoroughly and take necessary action for breach of tenancy.

12. Alterations and improvements

- 12.1 Tenants must obtain written permission from Landlord Services if they wish to make alterations or improvements to their home. Any alterations or improvements made without permission from Landlord Services will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.
- 12.2 Permission for hard flooring in properties above ground level will not be granted as this can cause a disturbance to those living in ground floor properties. Where a tenant has sought and been granted permission prior to this policy to install hard flooring in properties above ground level we reserve the right to withdraw consent at any time. Should complaints be received we will give appropriate advice to tenants which could involve the withdrawal of the consent and a requirement to remove the hard flooring.

13. Individuals' gardens

- 13.1 We recognise that poorly maintained gardens can have a detrimental effect on the local community, and it is important that tenants keep their gardens in a reasonable condition and in line with the terms of the agreement they have with the council, for example by

keeping grass and trees/foliage cut to a reasonable level and keeping gardens free from rubbish or excessive waste.

- 13.2 We will take appropriate action where necessary to ensure that tenants are maintaining their gardens to a reasonable level and in line with the terms of their agreement.

14. Vandalism and graffiti

Vandalism and graffiti can have an obvious negative effect within our communities and estates. Landlord Services will take action to make necessary repairs within a reasonable timescale where vandalism is identified. If an act of vandalism presents a health and safety risk, it will be dealt with as an emergency repair. Where graffiti is of an offensive nature, Landlord Services will arrange its removal within 24 hours of being made aware that it exists.

15. Litter and fly-tipping

- 15.1 We will respond to reports of fly-tipping in a timely manner and will arrange to remove it within a reasonable timescale using the powers available. Where fly-tipping presents a health and safety risk this will be dealt with as soon as possible.
- 15.2 Landlord Services will take appropriate action against perpetrators of fly-tipping where possible and if appropriate. We will work in conjunction with internal departments to deal with fly-tipping where it is appropriate to do so.

16. Vehicles and parking

- 16.1 We will investigate reports of untaxed, un-roadworthy or uninsured vehicles on housing land. Any vehicle which is deemed as causing an obstruction will also be investigated, for example vehicles causing an obstruction to other properties, dropped kerbs, disabled accesses, emergency vehicles, other vehicles, road users and pedestrians.
- 16.2 We will take appropriate action where we receive reports of residents driving across grassed areas, verges, pavements or causing damage to our estates by vehicle use.

17. Estate improvements

- 17.1 The landlord service has a capital budget for carrying out improvements to estates and blocks of homes with internal and external communal areas. These include:
- provision and improvement of car parking;

- security measures such as gates and barriers;
- hard and soft landscaping capital works.

17.2 In addition to 17.1 above, other revenue budgets (e.g. the ‘tenants’ bids’ fund) exist for smaller-scale and resident-led estate improvements designed to benefit the local community. These include:

- soft landscaping schemes in communal gardens;
- seating for residents in communal gardens;
- play equipment.

18. Landscaped areas

18.1 The council has a maintenance of open spaces contract to keep trees and shrubs on council land in a manageable condition and to ensure that trees and foliage do not encroach on footpaths or buildings. Landlord Services is included in the contract for the maintenance of housing land. The landlord service will, in partnership with the council’s contractor, maintain its soft and hard-landscaped areas, including trees, hedges, pathways and planted areas in accordance with the contract specification and will encourage and support, where appropriate, active involvement by residents in the maintenance of communal gardens.

18.2 The landlord service has adopted the council’s corporate tree policy, which details the circumstances under which work will be carried out to trees. The maintenance of trees within individual gardens is the responsibility of the tenant to maintain. We will usually only carry out work on trees that are dead, dying or dangerous or where it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property. Where a tree is in a conservation area or has a tree preservation order (‘TPO’) attached to it planning consent must be sought before any work is carried out.

18.3 The contractor will only carry out emergency tree works during bird nesting season between 1 March and 31 July.

18.4 Play areas are inspected on a weekly basis by our contractor, and monthly by or in-house contract management team.

19. CCTV and camera doorbells

- 19.1 Tenants must not install live or dummy CCTV cameras or camera doorbells in any internal or external communal area, or which covers a communal pathway.
- 19.2 Tenants must not install CCTV cameras or camera doorbells in their homes without written permission from Landlord Services. Once installed, any camera must not record any section of a neighbour's garden or communal area.
- 14.3 Landlord Services will defer to the Information Commissioner's guidance to determine whether recording technology is classed as CCTV, a camera doorbell or other.

20. Pest control

- 20.1 The landlord service, via the council's pest control service, will arrange for treatment to be carried out where infestations of pests occur in communal areas of blocks of flats or sheltered schemes.
- 20.2 Generally, tenants remain responsible for dealing with infestations in their homes (other than those living in sheltered accommodation) and, where necessary, for paying for a contractor to get rid of them. The exception to this is where requirements are imposed on us through the Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949.

21. Cleaning of internal communal areas

We aim to maintain high standards of cleanliness in our internal communal areas through effective monitoring of our communal cleaning contract and that these areas are cleaned to the standard set out in the contractual specification.

22. Management of empty properties

While our aim is to re-let empty properties quickly and in accordance with our re-let standard and housing allocations policy we recognise that properties will remain empty for varying periods of time. We will manage our empty properties ('voids') actively, therefore, and in compliance with relevant legislation as well as our own policies and procedures. Such active management will include (but will not be limited to):

- fire safety;
- gas safety;
- electrical safety;
- asbestos protection;
- legionella protection;
- damp and mould preventative measures;
- managing the external appearance of empty properties, for example the use of boarding/'Sitex' on windows and doors and a recognition that such boarding-up can blight an area if not managed effectively;
- external space maintenance such as gardens and grassed areas;

23. Fencing and boundaries

We will deal with all enquiries regarding fencing and boundaries via our separate fencing and boundary policy.

24. Anti-social behaviour

- 24.1 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and nuisance can have a significant detrimental effect on residents and communities and the council is committed to delivering a non-judgmental, impartial and balanced service.
- 24.2 For more information on how the council tackles ASB, please view the ASB policy and guidance on the council's website at [Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incident Policy 2021-2025 \(charnwood.gov.uk\)](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/corporate-anti-social-behaviour-and-hate-incident-policy-2021-2025).
- 24.3 Where the landlord services ASB team believes behaviour does not constitute ASB, tenants will be told why their reports are not classified as ASB. In these circumstances advice will be given to enable self-resolution where appropriate. In cases where it has been determined it is not ASB, but further action is required tenants will be advised that their reports will be managed under this policy (this will be determined by the investigating officer).

25. Low-level neighbour disputes

25.1 Landlord Services recognises the importance of neighbours being tolerant and respectful of each other and will encourage neighbours to resolve low level disputes amicably between them where appropriate.

25.2 Ways in which residents may be able to prevent low level reports being made against them may include:

- informing their neighbours if they are going to be having a one-off event;
- not removing carpets from upper floor flats so that noise transfers to lower down properties;
- considering the use of appliance mats if they are running washing machines etc. overnight;
- telling neighbours if shift patterns have changed so they can be understanding of one's needs;
- being considerate of one's neighbours;
- not carrying out repairs or other works late at night or at other unsociable hours;
- not playing music, TV or instruments too loudly

- keeping dogs and other pets under control;
- being aware of where children are playing, who is supervising them and what they are doing;

25.3 Matters on which we may be able to provide advice but will not investigate include the following:

- Day-to-day living noise - for example, playing with children, loud footfall, moving of furniture, babies/children crying, occasional noise from a device such as a speaker or television, toilets being flushed, vacuuming, lawn mowing, noise from household appliances (this is not an exhaustive list);
- Noise occurring at various times through different working patterns or one-off parties;
- Concerns that do not breach the tenancy agreement, for example, people staring, smoking or cooking odours or clashes due to lifestyle or cultural differences;
- Concerns that involve residents not being pleasant to each other but are not serious enough to justify our involvement;
- Boundary disputes unless associated with an ASB incident;
- Inconsiderate parking unless associated with an ASB incident;
- Ball games and youths congregating unless associated with an ASB incident.

26. Mediation

26.1 If all options that are relevant have been exhausted within section 19.2 and a person reporting ASB feels that he or she has not been able to resolve matters with the other party, he or she can contact the landlord services ASB team to request a mediation referral. An officer will consider such a request for mediation to support that person in resolving the dispute. In this instance we will keep parties informed of the progress of the dispute and what actions have been agreed to mitigate a repeat of the incident.

26.2 In some circumstances, a referral for community coaching may be more appropriate. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be discussed with the individual prior to any referrals being made.

27. Tenancy support

Providing support to vulnerable tenants through our tenancy support team underpins our approach to housing management. Tenancy support makes a significant contribution to stable and healthy communities, and improves economic welfare by helping to sustain tenancies, reduce failed tenancies/voids and maximise tenants' income. More information can be found in our tenancy support policy.

28. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed initially after being in operation for twelve months and thereafter every four years unless required earlier through legislative or regulatory changes.

29. Training

Suitable training on this policy will be given to members of staff whose job either directly or indirectly is affected by this policy. Refresher training on this policy at appropriate intervals will also be given or if the policy is changed materially.

30. Equality and diversity

We aim to ensure that all our policies are fair and transparent and have been impact-assessed according to our procedures and in accordance with legal requirements.

31. Responsibility

The relevant head of service is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy and may delegate amendments to it arising out of changes in legislation or regulation to the landlord services manager.

32. Other external and internal influences on this policy

- Housing allocations policy;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014;
- ASB & hate incident management framework;
- Charnwood Borough Council's tree policy and protocol;
- Code of practice for surveillance camera systems
- Corporate ASB policy and risk management framework;
- Data Protection Act 2018;

- Domestic abuse policy;
- Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Equality and diversity policy and strategy;
- General Data Protection Regulation;
- Homelessness Act 2002;
- Housing Act 1985;
- Housing Act 1996;
- Housing Act 2004;
- Ombudsman 'Spotlight on noise' report October 2022
- Policy in respect of vulnerability;
- Protections of Freedom Act 2012;
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2024;
- Tenancy support policy;
- Vulnerability policy.