
Subject:	NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 June 2022
Report of:	Louise Taylor, Head of Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Derek Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Social Housing, Port Health, Skills and Education
Decision Type:	Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek Cabinet approval of the draft Neighbourhood Management Policy attached at Appendix 1 for wider consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders.

Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet notes the content of this report and the Council's obligation to consult and publish a Neighbourhood Management Policy, in compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing, Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
2. That Cabinet approves the content of the draft Neighbourhood Management policy.
3. That Cabinet notes and approves the draft consultation plan for the Neighbourhood Management Policy
4. That Cabinet delegates to the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Housing, Port Health, Skills and Education, authority to make minor amendments to the policy arising from the consultation and thereafter adopt the policy on behalf of the Council with effect from 1 September 2022.
5. That Cabinet delegates to the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Housing, Port Health, Skills and Education, authority to make future minor amendments to the policy as required.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Dover District Council wants to ensure its Council housing estates and communal areas are well maintained, safe, attractive places where people can enjoy and take pride living.
- 1.2 The Regulator of Social Housing, Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires all registered providers of social housing to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own, clean and safe and to consult upon and publish a policy for maintaining and improving these areas.
- 1.3 Effective management of neighbourhood services is seen as key to the delivery of these ambitions and compliance with the regulatory standard and this policy has been developed in collaboration with a range of other Council service areas who provide estate services for our residents.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The term neighbourhood management is often used to describe a raft of services that relate to both tenancy and estate management.
- 2.2 Tenancy Management aims to support a tenant to uphold the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. Where appropriate and necessary it may involve taking action to enforce compliance with the terms of that Agreement.
- 2.3 Estate Management aims to create a well-maintained and managed environment where households feel content and safe to live.
- 2.4 Neighbourhood management therefore covers a diverse range of services including (but not limited to):
- Maintenance, repair and lighting of communal areas including footpaths and parking areas (within our ownership)
 - Management of soft landscaped areas including grass cutting
 - Cleaning and waste collection
 - Tenancy work to ensure tenants comply with the terms of their agreement ie to maintain their gardens and dispose of the waste appropriately
 - Supporting crime reduction initiatives and tackling anti-social behaviour
 - Estate improvements
 - Co-operation with other agencies delivering services in the community
- 2.5 The Housing Management team lead on the management of Council owned estates and work collaboratively with a wide range of other Council service areas, contractors and external agencies to deliver good quality neighbourhood services for tenants and leaseholders.

3. The Policy

- 3.1 The neighbourhood management policy has been developed to support the housing service meet the following objectives:
1. Play a key role in keeping Council estates and communal areas clean, safe, well maintained, and attractive places to live.
 2. Work in partnership with tenants, key local partners, contractors and other public bodies to achieve our objectives
 3. Set clear service standards for the maintenance and management of estates and communal areas
 4. React promptly to reports of problems and where necessary enforce the terms of tenancy agreement to manage the land the Council owns
 5. Put customers at the heart of our services by encouraging active customer involvement and consultation on all aspects of neighbourhood management
- 3.2 The policy applies to communal areas owned by Dover District Council and associated with Housing Revenue Account neighbourhoods and estates.
- 3.3 The policy is intended to provide guidance to tenants, leaseholders, service users and other stakeholders about the way in which services that affect the environment they live in are delivered, by who and to what standard.
- 3.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is attached at appendix 2. This has identified a potential negative impact upon disabled service users who store and/or charge their mobility scooters without our express permission in communal spaces in our blocks of flats and who may be subject to enforcement action to stop them doing this.

3.5 To mitigate any potential impact the housing service undertake to engage with the individual and conduct a full equality impact assessment. Where appropriate a range of solutions will be explored to try to avert the need for enforcement action.

4. Public Consultation

4.1 Consultation will take place with all current Council tenants and leaseholders for a 6-week period between 1 July 2022 and 15 August 2022.

4.2 A complete consultation plan (Appendix 3) provides details on who the Council and involve and consult with on the proposed policy.

5. Identification of Options

5.1 Option A: To approve the policy for wider consultation with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders and delegate to the Strategic Director (Corporate Services) in consultation with the Portfolio for Social Housing, Port Health, Skills and Education the authority to make minor revisions to the document following the outcome of the consultation exercise. Thereafter to formally adopt the policy on behalf of the Council. In the event that significant consultation responses are received, revised version will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

5.2 Option B: Not approve the draft policy for public consultation

6. Evaluation of Options

6.1 Option A is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- (a) The Council does not currently have a Neighbourhood Management policy and it expected to have such a policy under the Neighbourhood and Communities standard.
- (b) The Council is obligated to consult its tenants on the proposed contents of the policy.
- (c) Adoption of the proposed policy will allow the Council to comply with its regulatory responsibilities.

6.2 Option B is not recommended for the following reasons:

- (a) The Council is expected to prepare, consult, publish, and provide a Neighbourhood Management policy which the Council does not currently have.
- (b) Failure to consult tenants on the proposed policy would be in breach of the Standard.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 The services identified in the policy will be delivered within existing resources in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). No further financial implications have been identified as arising from the implementation of the proposed policy.

7.2 No additional staff implications have been identified with the approval for the consultation and implementation of the proposed policy.

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

8.1 No implications to the climate or environment have been identified with the approval for the consultation and implementation of the proposed policy.

9. Corporate Implications

9.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): 'Accountancy have been consulted in the writing of this report and have no further comment to make.'

9.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

9.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: The Equality Officer has been consulted during the development of this report and an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, which has identified a potential negative impact for disabled persons. Proposals to mitigate this impact have been noted at 2.7 in the report. The Equality Officer has no further comments to make, other than to remind Members that in discharging their responsibilities they are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

9.4 Other Officers (as applicable):

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Management Policy 2022

10.2 Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

10.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation plan

11. Background Papers

11.1 Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Communities Standard

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