

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Report of the Head of Landlord Services**

Item 5                    Draft Neighbourhood Policy

#### Purpose of Report

To provide the Board with the opportunity to comment on the draft new Neighbourhood Policy 2021-2025 before its likely progression to Cabinet.

#### Recommendations

That the Board comment on the draft new Neighbourhood Policy 2021-2025 at Appendix 1.

#### Background

The new policy will support compliance with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard (Regulator of Social Housing - 2012). Relevant extracts from the standard can be found at Appendix 2.

The policy describes the activities that are already in place, and will be sustained, to create neighbourhoods that are attractive, clean, safe, and secure places where residents want to live. The policy commits the Council to work in partnership with its tenants, leaseholders, and partner agencies to achieve this where effective to do so.

#### Officers to Contact

Peter Oliver  
Head of Landlord Services  
Tel: 0150 634 666  
Email: peter.oliver@charnwood.gov.uk

Andrew Staton  
Landlord Services Manager  
Tel: 0150 634 666  
Email: Andrew.staton@charnwood.gov.uk

# **CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **LANDLORD SERVICES**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY 2021 - 2025**

#### **DRAFT**

#### **1. Objectives of this policy**

1.1 This policy aims to:

- provide a basis on which the council can work with its tenants and leaseholders to improve their surrounding environment and create neighbourhoods that are attractive, clean, safe and secure places where residents want to live;
- create conditions where tenants and leaseholders can influence the extent and standard of neighbourhood services that the council provides;
- establish high levels of satisfaction from tenants and leaseholders about where they live and the value for money that their rent and service charges give.

1.2 This policy will also fulfil the government's regulatory requirements made on social housing providers and specifically in respect of this policy, contained in section 2.1 of its neighbourhood and community standard to:

*"...consult tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes."*

#### **2. Scope of this policy**

2.1 This policy applies to all the council's tenants and leaseholders living in its homes.

2.2 This policy applies to the following areas of the council's landlord service:

- Maintenance of internal communal areas;
- Maintenance of external communal areas owned by the council in its landlord capacity;
- Estate-based services provided for all tenants and leaseholders for which a service charge may or not be levied;
- Provision of communal facilities and services for tenants in sheltered accommodation;

- Estate and environmental improvements.
- 2.3 Owing to the following service areas being dealt with under different policies, legislation or regulation, this policy does not cover:
- the maintenance, repair and improvement of individual dwellings;
  - external areas of land not owned by the council in its landlord capacity;
  - tackling anti-social behaviour or any other tenancy enforcement action **other than** target-hardening and environmental improvements designed to reduce anti-social behaviour in communal areas owned by the council in its landlord capacity;
  - the adaptation of any communal areas, internal or external in order that individual tenants with disabilities may continue to live in their homes;
  - support services, including the mobile warden, service, to tenants;
  - projects that fall under the scope of the tenant bid scheme.

### **3. Policy statement**

- 3.1 We will work with tenants and leaseholders or with tenant and leaseholder groups to fulfil the objectives of this policy and will consult them as is appropriate and relevant in matters that this policy covers, as set out in 2.2 previously. The aim of this will be to enable tenants and leaseholders to have as much influence as is reasonably practicable in shaping estate-based services and improvements that we provide and to be able to scrutinise effectively our performance in delivering those services and improvements.
- 3.2 In order to deliver the policy objectives set out in section 1, the council will:
- deliver a programme of planned maintenance and improvements to internal and external communal areas including, but not limited to, refurbishment of floors and staircases, painting, fascia and soffit replacement, maintenance of car parks;
  - have a planned inspection regime of internal communal area inspections, in order to identify hazards, including unauthorised items presenting a fire hazard and to maintain compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
  - have a programme of cleaning of internal communal areas;

- deliver target-hardening or other environmental improvements intended, principally, to deter and reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour including a programme of communal entrance door replacement and repair;
  - dispose of rubbish and abandoned items in and on communal areas;
  - deliver environmental improvements;
  - maintain communal facilities for sheltered schemes such as laundries, guest rooms, communal lounges and communal kitchens.
- 3.3 Proposals for estate-based service development or projects may be made by staff or residents.
- 3.4 Operational procedures will be developed so that officer or resident-led proposals can be considered rigorously and at the appropriate level in the landlord service.
- 3.5 We will consult other council teams or external organisations that are not part of the landlord service as appropriate if the proposed service or project requires their involvement or might affect their own services if implemented.
- 3.6 We will co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where the council owns properties.

#### **4. Resident engagement**

As far as is reasonably practicable we will involve our residents in any planned or suggested service changes or one-off projects as covered in section 3 above. Involvement will include:

- working with established or emerging residents groups in would-be council-led service changes in order to gain consensus with or to change and improve on, proposals made;
- receiving, considering and working with tenant-led proposals for service changes;
- consulting tenants and leaseholders once proposals for service changes have been agreed in principle and if such proposals, if implemented, would affect them in terms of cost and/or would bring about significant changes to the way in which we deliver our landlord service.

#### **5. Finance**

- 5.1 There are three principal methods by which changes to estate-based services or projects as defined in this policy will be financed:

- (i) by funding through rental income into the housing revenue account's (HRA) repairs and investment budget, for example the internal redecoration of a block or blocks;
  - (ii) by making one-off specific budgetary provision in the HRA, for example, the provision of environmental improvements designed to deter or reduce anti-social behaviour;
  - (iii) by recovering the cost through the levying of a service charge, applied to all tenants and leaseholders benefiting from the additional service, subject to that being considered a legitimate recoverable service charge within the terms of the tenancy agreement or lease, for example, the introduction of a communal cleaning scheme.
- 5.2 The method of financing as outlined in 5.1 above will depend on the nature of the project or service change; but when more than one financing option is possible, we will consult residents as set out in section 4 above in order that agreement is reached on the method of financing.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless required earlier through legislative or regulatory changes.

## **7. Training**

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

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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 head of landlord services.

## **10. Other external and internal influences on this policy**

- 10.1 This policy has been created and should be implemented in conjunction with the following internal documents:
- Equality and diversity policy and strategy;
  - Corporate anti-social behaviour and hate incident policy
- 10.2 Similarly, this policy has been created and should be implemented in conjunction with the external documents and publications including but not limited to the:
- Housing Act 1985;
  - Housing Act 1996;
  - Housing Act 2004;
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;
  - Housing and Regeneration Act 2008;
  - Equality Act 2010;
  - Localism Act 2011;
  - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; and
  - Housing and Planning Act 2016;

## Appendix 2

### **Relevant Extracts from Neighbourhood and Community Standard (Regulator of Social Housing - 2012)**

#### *Neighbourhood management -*

*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.*

*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 shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider's homes.*

#### *Local area co-operation -*

*Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.*