

Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 10 June 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing

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Report Summary	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open report / non-key decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Good Neighbourhood Management Policy
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	This report sets out the Council's approach to managing complaints related to noise nuisance or disruption locally between neighbours, adopting a more mediatory methodology to foster positive relationships within our communities.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Cabinet approve the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	The Council has the option to rely on the ASB Policy for dealing with noise and nuisance between neighbours, but good practice and alignment with both the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman is to manage these relationships in a more mediatory way.
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	The Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman recommend the introduction of a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy which aligns with the Community Plan ambition 7 "Be a top performing, modern, accessible Council that get its everyday services right for the residents and businesses that it serves."

## **1.0 Background Information**

- 1.1 The Regulator for Social Housing, in its Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires all registered housing providers to publish a policy which outlines how, in consultation with tenants and leaseholders, the Council will work to maintain and enhance the neighbourhoods surrounding their homes.
- 1.2 This Good Neighbourhood Management Policy outlines the Council's approach to managing complaints and allegations where the situation is not defined as anti-social behaviour (ASB).

- 1.3 The Housing Ombudsman issued a spotlight report on Noise Complaints, providing advice and guidance to landlords on the unfairness of dealing with noise nuisance as ASB – requiring them to “develop a strategy for handling non-statutory noise seriously, sensitively and proportionately”. A summary of this report can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 This policy provides tenants, leaseholders and residents with a more mediatory, sensitive approach when they are complaining or being complained about regarding noise nuisance – it’s the right thing to do.

## **2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered**

- 2.1 The Council has the option to rely on the ASB Policy for dealing with noise and nuisance between neighbours, but good practice and alignment with both the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman is to manage these relationships in a better way by encouraging households to understand how they are residing in their home can affect those living next door or nearby.

## **3.0 Tenant Feedback**

- 3.1 Initial tenant feedback from the first drafts were that the policy did not clarify the intention to avoid conflict, and if required achieve conflict resolution, between parties; and that potentially the title ‘Good Neighbourhood Management Policy’ may create some confusion without clear explanation. One clear voice was that ‘I understand the aims that the policy is trying to achieve, breaching the gap between ASB and normal day to day living situations that may have caused upset.’
- 3.2 The early drafts referred to "our definition of ASB", tenant feedback questioned this terminology, ‘as we know there is no real finite definition of ASB so where are we getting ours from? I wonder if the word ‘our’ is the most appropriate to use?’ the wording was changed to reflect this.
- 3.3 The later revisions have been more favourably received, additional work is needed to produce a much more succinct easy read version, with graphics, for publication on the Council website and social media.
- 3.4 Noting in section 5.3 the reference to ‘We will actively consider the individual support needs of those involved’, feedback included ‘(I am) really pleased to see that this is mentioned specifically. Especially being an anxiety sufferer myself; pleased to see this will be a specific factor for both parties involved.’
- 3.5 The policy has had several revisions in tone, content, wording and style in response to tenant feedback. Future iterations would benefit from a blank page starting point with tenants suitably invested and upskilled to enable co-creation.

## **4.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Financial Implications - FIN25-26/2063**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report that can be quantified, but any changes in the policy that have a financial impact can be funded from existing budgets in the Housing, Health and Wellbeing directorate.

### **HR & Equalities implications HR2425/9458 FK**

- 4.2 There are no direct HR and Equalities implications in relation to our people as a result of implementing a new policy in relation to dealing with non-statutory noise complaints. However, once the policy is finalised and approved, it should be ensured that all relevant staff understand the content and how to apply it.

### **ICT Implications**

- 4.3 There are no direct Digital and Cyber implications arising from this report that can be quantified; however, it is recognised that a tell us once approach to ASB is mandatory and therefore any digital platforms and processes that arise on the back of this policy must integrate with each another.

### **Legal Implications LEG2425/1317**

- 4.4 The recommendations of this Report are supportable. Whilst there is no identifiable legal obligation to have a specific noise and nuisance policy, not having one is likely to put the Council at odds with both the Housing Ombudsman and The Regulator for Social Housing in their expectations in how the Council deals with noise and nuisance complaints that do not on their face meet the threshold for enforcement through the current recognised methods under nuisance or anti-social behaviour legislation.
- 4.5 Adopting an early intervention may negate the need for legal action further down the line under either piece of legislation and could avoid the costs and time involved in this type of litigation.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None