

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing

Neighbourhood Management Policy

Issue date: July 2024
Review date: July 2027



Cheshire West
and Chester

1. Management Information

Approval Date:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2027
Policy Owner:	Janet Lawton, Head of Housing Delivery
Responsible Service Area:	Council Housing Management Service
Responsible Director:	Director of Economy and Housing

2. Introduction

This policy applies to all housing management services delivered on behalf of the Council. The Council will ensure neighbourhoods are clean, safe, attractive and well managed whilst creating vibrant communities.

3. Aim of Policy

The Council will ensure that the neighbourhoods it manages are places where people feel safe, choose to live and want to visit. The Council believe that everyone should be able to live in a well maintained safe and clean environment which they can be proud of. Staff will work with relevant stakeholders to ensure the successful management of neighbourhoods to statutory and regulatory standards.

4. Strategic context

This policy helps the Council to meet the following national and local strategic aims.

Social Housing Regulations Act 2023 – Consumer Standards

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenancy Standard

[CWAC Borough Plan 2024 – 2028](#) - sets out how the Council will work with all its residents to build a stronger future where the Council and residents all play their part in creating thriving, caring and sustainable communities.

The Borough Plan has six missions as follows:

- Starting well - The best start for the borough`s children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Tackling hardship and poverty - More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.

- Opportunity in a fair local economy - Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
- Neighbourhood pride - Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- Greener communities - Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

[Together with Tenants Charter | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)
[Tenant Engagement Strategy 2025-30](#)

5. Definition and legislation

Neighbourhood management refers to the local organisation, delivery and coordination of core civic and community services within a small, specific, built up area. It involves having a responsible lead such as a Housing Officer to ensure reasonable conditions and coordinate the general maintenance of the specific area.

6. How the Policy will be delivered

The delivery of this policy and associated procedures will be the responsibility of the Council. This Policy will be available to all employees through the intranet and regular training will be provided to relevant employees on all policies and procedures.

If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the policy owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.

We will measure the effectiveness of the delivery of this policy through the Together with Tenants Charters via the tenant satisfaction measures:

- TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
- TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.

Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Maintenance service is provided directly by the Councils StreetCare Service. There is a Service Level Agreement in place (appendix 1) which ensures that borders and shrub areas are looked after according to the plant species and grassed areas are cut as appropriate during the different seasons.

The Council aim to maintain a healthy tree population so we will not carry out work for aesthetic or light restriction reasons only. On occasions it may be necessary to remove an established tree, but this will not done unnecessarily.

Where staff or contractors identify that a tree is dead, diseased, dying, or dangerous, work will be carried out to ensure that it poses no risk to the public or property.

The Council may inspect and undertake works to trees in tenant's gardens where they pose a possible health and safety risk or are damaging the property. Generally, the maintenance of trees in tenants' gardens is the responsibility of the tenant and this is specified in the tenancy agreement.

Cleaning of communal areas in blocks of flats

The cleaning of the communal areas in blocks is the responsibility of the tenant and leaseholder under the tenancy agreement/leasehold agreement. Tenants, leaseholders, and other customers are to play their part in keeping their neighbourhoods clean by disposing of unwanted items responsibly and cleaning up after their pet. Cleaning is defined as keeping internal and external communal areas swept, mopped and free from litter and graffiti.

Environmental crime, including fly tipping

The Council take a robust approach to environmental crime, and staff will work in partnership with enforcement agencies, which could include legal action against those committing such crimes on land owned by the Council, for example fly tipping. We take such issues seriously and will ensure that these are dealt with quickly.

The Council will investigate all instances of fly tipping, and in the event that the identity of tenant or person responsible is established, a request to remove the items within a reasonable timescale will be given. If the request is not adhered to, staff will arrange for the removal of the items and will recharge those concerned for the whole cost of this service.

Neighbourhood and Block Inspections

Staff have a duty in the course of their day-to-day work to note any repairs or maintenance requirements identified both within a communal area or a neighbourhood, particularly those which pose a threat to health and safety and report these promptly.

A programme of robust neighbourhood and block inspections will be undertaken to ensure that they are safe, clean, and well maintained. Any safety issues identified following inspections will be reported through our Housing Management system and be actioned in line with our Responsive Repairs policy. We also request tenants and leaseholders to report any safety issues within their block.

High Rise Blocks – Joseph Groome Towers

These three blocks fall under the Building Safety Act and have their own inspection regime which lies outside of this policy. For further information, please refer to the Building Safety Policy.

Abandoned Vehicles

All vehicles on communal or other land owned by the Council aside from individual tenancies must be taxed and, in a road, worthy condition or registered with the DVLA as off road through the Statutory Off-Road Notice (SORN). The Council consider any vehicle which does not meet these requirements to be causing a nuisance, and as such action will be taken to remove.

Graffiti removal

Graffiti impacts negatively on the aesthetic appeal and appearance of a neighbourhood. Graffiti reported or identified will be removed in line with our Service Standards, along with the reporting of criminal damage to the police where applicable.

- Offensive Graffiti following a report will be removed within 3 days.
- All other Graffiti following a report will be removed within 10 days.

Garden condition

For tenants with responsibility for their own gardens must ensure that they are kept tidy and not overgrown as this can negatively impact upon the kerbside appeal of neighbourhoods and can often be an indicator of poor property condition. Following identification of a tenant's garden being overgrown, support (including sign posting) will be provided however should the tenant fail to rectify the issue, Breach of Tenancy procedure will be followed.

Partnerships

The Council are aware that we manage homes in neighbourhoods where there is a mix of social housing and private owners. Staff will work closely with other landowners to ensure that identified issues are addressed quickly and appropriately. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The maintenance and improvement of footpaths and roads
- The maintenance of lighting
- The maintenance of culverts

In addition to the work we undertake, we will also work collaboratively with other organisations, agencies, and stakeholders, to ensure that services delivered outside of the Council's remit positively contribute to maintaining neighbourhoods that are clean, safe, and attractive.

7. Equality and reasonable adjustment statement

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for customers and staff, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with our Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

8. Related Documents

- Responsive Repairs Policy, inc Right to Repair
- ASB Policy
- Abandoned and untaxed vehicle procedure
- Neighbourhood and Block procedure
- Grounds Maintenance Service Standard

9. Equality Analysis

Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	Inform that this policy can be provided in alternative formats. Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training for staff in the delivery of this policy.
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See appendix 2 for full Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.

10. Consultation and Business Intelligence

The policy was created in consultation with the Council's tenants leaseholders and staff.

11. Monitoring and review

The Council Housing Management Board has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years starting from the date it is approached and adopted.

12. Approval and Review History

The approval route for all policies and procedures is via the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning who has delegated powers for policy approval from the Council's Executive Cabinet.

Date	Version	Approved by
28/07/2022	V1	Cabinet Member for Housing
02/07/2024	2.1	Cabinet Minister of Homes Planning and Safer Communities

13. Document Revision History

Date amended	Version	Key Changes
	1	Original Version
20/06/2022	1.2	Revised Version following tenant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim of Policy updated to reflect the partnership between tenants, leaseholders and partners.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning heading revised to 'Cleaning of Communal Areas' and information on clearing up after a pet. • Under Garden condition information added that support will be provided.
04/05/2024	1.2	No Changes
05/07/2024	V2	<p>Revised version following tenant feedback</p> <p>Information about the cleaning of communal areas and maintenance of trees made clearer.</p> <p>Information about block inspections for high/low rise flats.</p> <p>Included timeframe for removal of graffiti and fly tipping.</p> <p>Information about support provided for upkeep of gardens.</p> <p>Included within related documents the Grounds Maintenance Service Standard.</p> <p>Information about Tenant Together Charter and the Regulator of Social Housing tenant satisfaction measures.</p> <p>Made clear that this policy document can be provided in alternative formats.</p> <p>Informed about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy.</p>
18/09/2025	V2.2	Revised version to take into account the insourcing of the housing management service from ForHousing.

Grounds Maintenance Service Level Agreement – HRA Land

Between

**Council Landlord Service &
Streetcare Services**

Date of commencement: 01/04/2024

1. General description of the service

The services to be provided by Streetcare will be the provision of grounds maintenance services to all areas with the exception of highway and private land, as identified on the specified maps. The specified maps are held and maintained by CWaC Property Services. Grounds maintenance services include grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, vegetative weed control and hedge and basic tree maintenance.

(The exceptions to the above are general emergency tree maintenance)

2. Roles and responsibilities

Client – Strategic Housing and Commissioning (CWaC) –

Responsible for the specification of grounds maintenance services, payment for services delivered, monitoring of the budget and management of any performance issues where these cannot be resolved by ForHousing and Commercial Management.

Cheshire West & Chester Representative – Head of Housing

Contract management – Commercial Management (CWaC) –

Responsible for the management of the housing contract, including the SLA between Strategic Housing and Commissioning and Streetcare.

Cheshire West & Chester Representative – Commercial Management

Grounds maintenance service provider – Streetcare (CWaC) – Responsible for delivering the grounds maintenance service on HRA (housing revenue account) land, as defined by the specified maps.

Cheshire West & Chester Representative – Streetcare Manager

Housing management service provider – ForHousing –

Responsible for monitoring and managing the service provided by Streetcare. ForHousing will report grounds maintenance performance monthly to Commercial Management, as part of the regular cycle of contract meetings.

Forhousing Representative – Housing Manager

3. Service standards

The service standards expected under this SLA are as stated in Appendix 1 – Service Standards: Greenspaces Grounds Maintenance. The Summer and Winter programmes will change monthly depending on the time of the year and the weather. The actual grass cutting regime will be determined by the rate of growth but there will be a planned programme to ensure regular maintenance. This programme will be made available to the nominated officers from Strategic Housing and Commissioning, Commercial Management and ForHousing by 1st March each year and the updated programme will be accessible via the

Cheshire West and Chester Council website; [Grass and grounds maintenance | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Grass cutting takes place between March and October. Timeframes vary according to the season, weather, and location. Sometimes we keep certain areas long to promote wildflower growth. The grass cutting schedule for each area can be found using the interactive map via the above website. If the ground is suitable, we will cut certain areas more often where it's needed.

4. Core programme

The core programme covers grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, vegetative weed control and hedge. The core programme will be delivered for a fixed fee per annum. Streetcare will notify Strategic Housing and Commissioning of any proposed changes to the annual fee by 31 December in the preceding year. Any increase in the annual fee will need to be approved by the Senior Manager, Strategic Housing & Commissioning.

5. Additional Services

Non-core programme works will be requested by ForHousing, following approval from Strategic Housing and Commissioning. The works will be requested via the CRM system operated by Streetcare. Streetcare should respond within 5 working days from notification to Streetcare and advise on the cost and lead time, costs will, wherever possible, be based on a schedule of rates which will be revised each year and issued to Strategic Housing by 31 December and effective from 1 April in the following year. Quotes for additional works will be valid for a period of 30 days, following this a new quotation will be required. Non routine works include hard/soft landscaping, bonfire clearance, fly-tipping, and waste removal etc. Non routine works will be invoiced in addition to the routine works, monthly in arrears. The client service will be able to commission additional works from other service providers in instances where this represents better value for money.

6. Requirements

6.1 Access to sites

Streetcare will, wherever possible, gain access to sites via metalled carriageways or footpaths, with particular attention being paid to sites where access is restricted, preventing the use of large plant. The operatives will fully acquaint themselves with such problem areas. ForHousing will ensure that access is provided to Streetcare to allow adequate machinery access no less than 1900mm. Streetcare will be allowed with pre-approval from ForHousing to create access and will re-charge Strategic Housing and Commissioning for any work undertaken.

6.2 Plant, tools, equipment, machinery and vehicles

Streetcare will ensure that all vehicles, plant, equipment and machinery is suitable for the purpose for which it is being used, causes no danger or nuisance to the public and is suitable for the location and environment where it is being used.

Operators of plant, machinery and vehicles will use the same in a responsible manner and be trained and thoroughly competent in their use. Appropriate licences will be held where necessary.

All road vehicles will be fitted with flashing hazard beacons which should be operated in poor weather conditions and in emergency situations.

No drivers or operators will be under the age of 17.

The operators will ensure that all plant, machinery, equipment and vehicles are garaged or made secure at the end of each working day.

Grass cutting machinery will be of the appropriate type, well maintained and correctly adjusted to give a clean even cut without damaging the grass.

The operators should never use any vehicle or machinery on sloping ground exceeding the gradient recommended by the manufacturer of the vehicle or machinery.

6.3 Drains and services

Where possible all measures should be taken to protect any services that may be damaged during maintenance operations, for example pipes, ducts, sewers, service mains, overhead cables etc.

6.4 Materials

All materials supplied will be as per British Standards specification. Plant stock and substrates will conform to horticultural specification requirements.

6.5 Branding

Streetcare vehicles will be appropriately liveried as working for Cheshire West and Chester Council.

7. Performance management

Performance and Key Performance Indicators will be collated from Cheshire West and Chesters reporting system to produce a monthly report which is broken down and will be monitored against the programme of scheduled works and the services standards as detailed in Appendix 1. Streetcare will provide ForHousing and Commercial Management with monthly reports within 5 working days of the month end date. The reports will include, as a minimum:

- Works that should have been completed as part of the core programme but which have not been completed and an explanation as to why the works have not been completed;
- A programme of core programme works for the forthcoming month;

- Non routine works that have been ordered in the previous month, including the value and anticipated completion date;
- Non routine works that have been completed in the previous month, including the value and date completed;
- Non routine works that are outstanding, including the reason for delay, value and anticipated completion date;
- All compliments, comments or complaints received.

Monthly performance review meetings will be attended by representatives from ForHousing and Streetcare. Performance will be reviewed, discussed and documented. Service improvement plans may be requested by ForHousing if required to address recurring performance issues. Non-delivery of the programmed works for the preceding month, where there is no accepted mitigation for non-delivery, will incur 5 penalty points. Penalty points will be valid for 6 months. The accumulation of more than 10 penalty points in any rolling 6 month period will require a service improvement plan (SIP) from Streetcare. The SIP will be submitted within two weeks of the end of the month end date. As a minimum the Service Improvement Plan will contain:

- Date of plan
- Details of:
- Performance failure
 - Service Improvement Objectives
 - Service improvement timeline
 - Methodology and approach to delivery of plan
 - Resources required
 - Measurable success criteria
 - Extra monitoring and reporting to be set in place for the duration of the plan

ForHousing will confirm in writing, within 5 working days of receiving the service improvement plan in the required format & content if the plan is agreed.

8. Quarterly Contract Review Meetings

Meetings will be convened, with senior representatives from Strategic Housing and Commissioning, Commercial Management, ForHousing and Streetcare, to review contract performance and to address any matters that cannot be resolved at the monthly performance meetings. Meetings will take place during the peak maintenance season, in April, July, and September.

9. Contacts and Communications

All issues relating to service delivery should be referred to Streetcare. Issues can be reported via the Council website and/ or Contact Centre

All complaints regarding the quality of services delivered will be investigated and a response given to the complainant via the Streetcare CRM system. Response will be provided in accordance with the timescales set out in the CWaC corporate complaints procedure. Any complainants contacting ForHousing regarding grounds maintenance issues should be re-directed to the normal CWaC complaint channels.

10. Change Procedure

Any proposed changes to either the SLA or the service standards document should be discussed at the monthly performance meetings and agreed by all parties. Additional grounds maintenance requirements for any new housing stock will need to be reflected in the SLA and service standards document and the specified maps updated to indicate the additional areas covered by the SLA. Strategic Housing will advise Streetcare of any additional requirements. Strategic Housing and Streetcare will agree any consequent increase in the core fee. Streetcare are responsible for updating any documentation to reflect the agreed changes.

11. Duration of agreement

The service level agreement will cover a three-year period from the date of commencement, 1st April 2024. The SLA will be reviewed annually to ensure specification is fit for purpose.

12. Termination of agreement

Either party can serve notice of termination. The notice period is 6 months.

Appendix 2 – Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

Area of activity or change	Neighbourhood Management Policy
IMDF Approval	Allan Batty, Senior Housing Policy Officer

STAGE ONE - SCOPING	Outlines the decision that is being made any why
STAGE TWO - RESEARCH	Outlines the collaboration and research that will inform this decision
STAGE THREE - FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS	Considers how learnings from research and engagement are being embedded, the potential impact of the decision on different people and how these can best be managed.

STAGE ONE – SCOPING	
Consider points such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where has the proposed activity or change come from and why is it needed? Why is it important to the Council? How will this affect the tenant / customer journey or colleague experience? 	What activity or change is being proposed and why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policy to ensure it meets the requirements of staff, the Council and its tenants and leaseholders Review policy to ensure that it complies with best practice guidance including the Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard Consult with tenants and leaseholders
	What benefits are you trying to achieve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy to consider all requirements Policy to be clear about being developed by best practice guidance and the Consumer Standards framework Policy to be informative, to be clear and in plain English Meet the needs of staff, tenants and leaseholders
STAGE TWO – RESEARCH	
Consider points such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What groups or individuals will you approach to discuss this? How will you ensure that these people are diverse and representative? (See Equality and Diversity table in stage three) 	Who will help develop your thinking so that different experiences and perspectives are included? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with tenants and leaseholders using closed facebook page. Carry out a review of feedback from tenants via complaints, transactional surveys and tenant satisfaction measures to ensure a full understanding of the presenting issues. Undertake an equality impact assessment to identify any positive and/or negative impacts on protected characteristics.
	What research will you do to inform your understanding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all relevant requirements, including good practice from the Regulator for Social Housing and their Consumer Standards framework.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any data you can look at to support you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive reading on other organisations policies in this area has been undertaken
STAGE THREE – FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS	
Consider points such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have people told you are some of the key issues? What good practice is happening in other organisations? What changes are you planning to make because of the things you've found out? 	What have you learnt from your research and engagement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with tenants and leaseholders informed on minor changes to the policy which is recorded in the final document.
	How will you embed what you've learnt into your activity or change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make relevant minor changes to the policy Inform within the document that this can be provided in alternative formats. Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy. Best practice from other organisations has been incorporated into the policy

Equity and Diversity - Not everyone has the same access to opportunities or services, and the things that make us different – such as the characteristics listed below – can affect our experiences and outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider how different people could be impacted by any activity or change we want to bring about.

How could the proposed activity or change affect people with these characteristics (positively or negatively)?		-		+
Age (Younger or older people)				
Caring responsibilities (Parents and those looking after an older or disabled person)				
Digital inclusion (People without access to digital platforms or devices)				
Educational attainment (People who have experienced barriers to formal education)				
Ethnicity, race and nationality (Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers)				
Financial inclusion (People experiencing financial barriers or challenges)				
Marriage / civil partnership (Legal union between different-sex or same-sex couples)				
Mental health (People with a mental disability or ill-health)	Clean, attractive, safe and well maintained surroundings can have a positive impact on mental wellbeing by reducing stress & anxiety and improving mood. The opposite can occur where a person's surroundings are untidy, there is fly tipping or damaged			

	infrastructure. The policy aims to support us in ensuring that the neighbourhoods remain clean, safe, attractive, and well managed.	
Neurodiversity (Such as people with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia)	Clean, attractive, safe and well maintained surroundings can have a positive impact on mental wellbeing by reducing stress & anxiety and improving mood. The opposite can occur where a person's surroundings are untidy, there is fly tipping or damaged infrastructure. The policy aims to support us in ensuring that the neighbourhoods remain clean, safe, attractive, and well managed.	
Physical health (People with a physical disability or ill-health)		
Pregnancy and maternity (Someone who is pregnant or has recently given birth)		
Religion, faith or belief (All religions and faiths, including people with no religion)		
Sex (Men and women)		
Gender identity (Including trans and non-binary people)		
Sexual orientation (Such as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people)		
Any other characteristic		

Managing positive and negative effects	
<p>Consider points such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need to escalate any issues or seek legal advice? • Can you see any opportunities to promote or celebrate positive outcomes? • How will you build monitoring into the implementation of your activity or change and who will you report to? 	<p>If potential negative effects have been identified, how will any harm be reduced or avoided?</p>
	<p>If potential positive effects have been identified, how can we ensure these are realised?</p> <p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake regular neighbourhood inspections • ensure contracted services such as cleaning are robustly managed • seek tenant and colleague feedback to drive service improvements • ensure we have strong, mutually beneficial relationships with partner agencies who also have a vested interest in neighbourhoods such as the Police, Local Authority and Fire & Rescue Services.
	<p>How and when will the impacts of your activity or change be monitored moving forward?</p> <p>All feedback and reports from colleagues and tenants will be reviewed quarterly to monitor the impact of any changes</p>