



# Public Document Pack STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB  
Telephone 01453 766321  
www.stroud.gov.uk Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

Monday, 29 March 2021

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

A remote meeting of the Housing Committee will be held on **THURSDAY, 8 APRIL 2021** at **7.00 pm**

Kathy O'Leary  
Chief Executive

*This is a remote meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.*

### **Venue**

*This meeting will be conducted using Zoom and a separate invitation with the link to access the meeting will be sent to Members, relevant officers and members of the public who have submitted a question.*

### **Public Access**

*Members of the public, who have not submitted a question, are invited to access the meeting streamed live via Stroud District Council's YouTube channel.*

### **Recording of Proceedings**

*A recording of the meeting will be published onto the [Council's website](#). The whole of the meeting will be recorded except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of press and public.*

## **A G E N D A**

1. **APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies of absence.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
To receive declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES (Pages 3 - 10)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 02 February 2021.
4. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**  
The Chair of the Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS  
Noon on Monday 5 April 2021**

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services,  
Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and can be sent by email to  
Democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

5. **UPDATE OF THE TENANT LED SERVICE STANDARDS (Pages 11 - 30)**  
To agree the updates made to the Tenant Led Service Standards.
6. **CLEANER ESTATES STRATEGY 2021-24 (Pages 31 - 42)**  
To agree that the strategy is fit for purpose and that a detailed action plan is to be presented to Housing Committee in June 2021.
7. **UPDATED TENANT SERVICES ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POLICY (Pages 43 - 60)**  
To note the updates made to the Tenant Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
8. **MEMBER REPORTS**
- 8a. **TENANT REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE (Verbal Report)**
9. **MEMBER QUESTIONS**  
See Agenda Item 4 for deadlines for submission.

**Members of Housing Committee**

**Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)**

Councillor Catherine Braun  
Councillor Stephen Davies  
Councillor Jim Dewey  
Councillor Chas Fellows  
Councillor Colin Fryer

**Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Lindsey Green  
Councillor Julie Job  
Councillor Norman Kay  
Councillor Gary Powell  
Councillor Debbie Young



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 February 2021

7.00 pm – 8.41 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

# 3

#### Membership

<b>Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Colin Fryer	P
<b>Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	P
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present                      A = Absent

#### Tenant Representatives

Sandra Longstreth                      P

#### Other Member(s) in Attendance

Councillor Doina Cornell  
Councillor Ken Tucker

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities  
Head of Housing Services  
Head of Contract Services  
Income & Systems Manager  
Project Manager  
Head of Property Services

Housing Strategy and Community  
Infrastructure Manager  
Accountancy Manager  
Democratic Services & Elections Officer  
Senior Democratic Services & Elections  
Officer

Councillor Ross, the Head of Housing Services and Councillor Young gave their thanks to Peter Stoate who had joined Stroud District Council in 2011 and had become the Head of Contract Services for the legacy he had left and offered their condolences.

#### HC.022

#### APOLOGIES

There were none.

**HC.023**                      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**HC.024**                      **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**                      **That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 are approved as a correct record**

**HC.025**                      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**HC.026**                      **ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Head of Contract Services provided a general update on the Energy Strategy which had been adopted by Housing Committee in 2017. He confirmed that the piece of work to fully consider all viable options to maximise the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Ratings including costs and timescales had not yet been carried out, they would however ensure that this work had synergy with the Corporate Strategy which had also not yet been adopted.

The Head of Contract Services drew the Members attention to paragraph 2.2 which laid out the average SAP ratings for the Councils properties. He advised that it may not be possible to upgrade all properties to Band C, especially non-traditional builds, however they would be looking to ensure an average rating of C across the properties as a whole. It was also advised that work had been ongoing to increase the carbon savings for some properties, details of works carried out were provided in paragraph 2.6.

It was confirmed that a bid had been placed for The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator, 17 schemes were being considered and an announcement to confirm who had been awarded the funds was imminent. An Energy Innovation Officer had been recently appointed and they would be responsible for developing key messages and actions to assist households to change their behaviour and educate tenants further.

An additional report would be brought to Housing Committee in September to provide further detail around the actions to reduce SAP ratings on the Councils housing stock.

Councillor Davies referred to paragraph 2.1 and asked whether it would be useful to do a comparison to see how much better we were doing against the original standard compared to the new standard. The Head of Contract Services said that it would be possible to compare to the original standard however in terms of overall SAP points it was approximately 6 points different. It was also confirmed that there was an error in the table in paragraph 2.5 which should say '1 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019' instead of '1 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2020', this was similar for rows 1 and 2 which should say '1 Jan 2017 to 31 Dec 2017' and '1 Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2018'.

Councillor Davies also asked how long it would take to insulate all of the Council stock if we continued at the same rate. The Head of Contract Services advised that an answer could be provided to Councillor Davies outside of the meeting.

Councillor Braun stated that it was great to see an Energy Innovation Officer now in post and asked whether it was worth refreshing the energy strategy prior to the report coming

back to September Committee. The Head of Contract Services advised that they would be planning to do this and that the Energy Innovation Officer could work with the CN2030 Officer to look at the actions and common themes.

Councillor Fryer asked for clarification regarding paragraph 3.6 as to when funds would be available to carry out the works. The Head of Contract Services advised that work had already begun however they needed to ensure that the works were affordable and available, the scenarios had not yet been considered in full and this work needed to be carried out before they could commit.

Councillor Job asked whether there was any data available regarding cost and efficiency for the 5 dimplex quantum systems that had been installed. The Head of Contract Services advised that some data was available however they had struggled to get tenants to provide the data from their energy bills and this would be something that the Energy Innovation Officer would be looking into. Sandra Longstreth, the Tenant Representative, advised that this could be included within her role to try and assist the tenants to engage with the Council.

Councillor Dewey asked whether we had been sharing information with other Councils or on forums to help find ideas for the problems we were facing. It was confirmed that this work is ongoing and that we had been exchanging ideas across the Country and even with partners outside of the UK.

Councillor Dewey proposed an amendment to change b) in the decision box to the following:

'b) Agree that the following will be presented to the September 2021 Housing Committee, to inform the budgeting setting process for 2022/23 and beyond:

- (i) A detailed costed plan setting out options to deliver a whole house retrofit for each home by 2030, to meet the targets in the District Council's Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy
- (ii) An outline costed plan of options to achieve the "Enhanced Improvements" scenario within the timeframe of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (ref: December 2019 Committee paper and link to improvement modelling)

c) Agree that a financial report will be presented to the December 2021 Housing Committee identifying resources from the Housing Revenue Account to deliver these plans.'

Councillor Miles seconded the amendment proposed by Councillor Dewey.

Councillor Davies advised that he did not have any problems with the amendment however he would not be able to vote for the report as it did not reflect the climate emergency that had been declared.

Councillor Braun stated that it was a helpful amendment as it clarified the decision timeframes.

Councillor Miles commended the amendment as it supported the goal to ensure that tenants have warm affordable homes whilst meeting the commitment to maximise carbon reduction.

Councillor Dewey asked Councillors to support the amendment as it would give tenants more security in their homes, reduce fuel poverty in the uncertain times we faced and help support our Carbon Neutral aims.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried unanimously.

Councillor Kay proposed the substantive motion including the agreed amendment, Councillor Miles seconded.

On being put to the vote the motion including the amendment was carried with 7 votes for, 3 votes against and one abstention.

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To note the progress made to date;**
  - b) **Agree that the following will be presented to the September 2021 Housing Committee, to inform the budgeting setting process for 2022/23 and beyond:**
    - (i) **A detailed costed plan setting out options to deliver a whole house retrofit for each home by 2030, to meet the targets in the District Council’s Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy**
    - (ii) **An outline costed plan of options to achieve the “Enhanced Improvements” scenario within the timeframe of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (ref: December 2019 Committee paper and link to improvement modelling)**
  - c) **Agree that a financial report will be presented to the December 2021 Housing Committee identifying resources from the Housing Revenue Account to deliver these plans.**

**HC.027**                      **GENERAL HOUSING: ALLOCATION OF GRANT TO EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager introduced the report that requested support for the allocation of a £50,000 grant to the Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT) dependent on the completion of a legal agreement. The ECLT had been established in 2013 and had recently completed their first development of 23 houses which had been heavily oversubscribed. They had already been granted funding from Homes England for a further 31 homes but were now requesting funding from the Council for a further development of 17 homes which they would be looking to start in 2026. It was confirmed that the Council had sufficient funds to be able to provide the grant to ECLT. The further development would be dependent on the outcome of a local housing needs assessment which the ECLT would be looking to carry out in 2024 and if for any reason the land was not purchased or used for affordable housing the legal agreement would secure the return of the funding to the Council. The grant worked out at approximately £3,000 per affordable home, the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that in her opinion this was good value for money.

In response to a question from Councillor Davies the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager confirmed that the government had reopened their funding to support CLTs, a further £4million was being provided as revenue funding.

Proposed by Councillor Davies and Seconded by Councillor Kay.

Councillor Davies advised that he was keen to propose this as the new homes would be within his ward, he stated that community land trusts had key benefits including being

able to select local people for the new properties. He advised that it was important that the Council supported more parishes and communities to be able to do this.

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) had established a community housing hub which provided support and information to rural communities and encouraged any communities looking into this to seek information from the GRCC.

Councillor Braun stated that she was in support of the proposal and that the ECLT had done a fantastic job and already delivered many new units.

Councillor Kay thanked the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager for an excellent report and the ECLT for their well-structured application.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**            **To authorise the allocation of £50,000 Affordable Housing Grant to Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT), subject to the completion of a legal agreement between SDC and ECLT.**

#### **HC.028**

#### **SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

The Project Manager introduced the report which was split into two sections, section 1 provided a programme update and section 2 detailed the proposal for the schemes to be modernised in the next financial year. It was confirmed that by mid-April they were hoping to have completed 4 Hubs. The sheltered modernisation housing steering group had considered the current situation when looking at the proposals for the next year and were recommending that the programme now focused on the Independent + schemes to allow feedback from those using the facilities to further develop the Hub model and inform future works.

Councillor Powell asked what the timescales would be for Vizard Close and Jenner Court. The Project Manager advised that each scheme would likely be a 14-week programme but they both would be completed within the next financial year.

Councillor Miles asked how they would carry out in-depth consultations going forward with the restrictions brought by Covid. The Project Manager advised that at Springfield court the consultation was carried out by a telephone questionnaire which proved to be successful as they managed to speak to more residents than they had previously at the consultation coffee mornings, this method would be used going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Powell and Seconded by Councillor Fryer.

Councillor Green advised that she would vote in favour of this because Jenner Court was overdue refurbishment and she had been in contact with many of the tenants about their facilities.

Councillor Miles stated that it was wonderful that despite Covid-19 the programme had stayed on track and within budget and offered her thanks to the Sheltered Housing Team for achieving this.

Councillor Cornell, Dursley Ward Councillor, advised that she was really pleased to see that Vizard Close would be refurbished and supported Councillor Miles in her statements

of thanks to the team regarding the great work that continued throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Councillor Fryer echoed Councillor Cornell's comments and stated it was great to see both Vizard Close and Jenner Court on the list for modernisation works next year.

Councillor Powell thanked the Sheltered Housing Team and advised that he had received very good feedback from Willow Road.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**            **That Vizard Close in Dursley and Jenner Court in Berkeley will have modernisation works carried out in the financial year 2021/22.**

**HC.029**                    **INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY 2021-24 (TENANT SERVICES)**

The Income & Systems Manager introduced the report which sought committee's approval for the Tenant Services Income Management Strategy. The strategy set out the direction of income collection and defined what the income management team was doing to support and maximise income solutions for customers to prevent arrears and sustain tenancies and included 5 key priorities.

Proposed by Councillor Powell and Seconded by Councillor Fryer.

Councillor Braun advised that currently there were issues with rent collection and it was therefore important to make it clear what the strategy involved and that show that the Council were able to do as much as they could to support tenants.

Councillor Kay gave his thanks to the incomes team, he stated it was a difficult job as without income the Housing Revenue Account and the work we planned to do would suffer.

Councillor Miles stated that it was very important at this time to have the emphasis on enabling people to have the skills to be able to pay their rent on time, the Income Team would work with people to ensure they have skills to manage their money.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**            **To approve the Strategy**

**HC.031**                    **MEMBER REPORTS**

a) Performance Monitoring:

Councillor Kay questioned whether the contract at Ringfield in Nailsworth had now begun. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that he would check and respond outside the meeting to Councillor Kay.

Councillor Braun highlighted the increase in rent arrears by 35% and advised that this was just the beginning of the impact of Covid and that further impacts were expected over the coming months.



**HC.032**                      **WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no questions or comments on the Work Programme.

**HC.033**                      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Member questions were submitted. They were answered by Councillor Ross. (Refer to the Council's [recording](#) and [Agenda Item 11](#)).

The meeting ended at 8.41 pm

Chair

This page is intentionally left blank

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 APRIL 2021

**5**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>UPDATE OF THE TENANT LED SERVICE STANDARDS</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	Housing Committee to agree the updates made to the Tenant Led Service Standards.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b>  <b>a) Adopt the updated Tenancy Service Standards.</b> <b>b) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Chair of Housing Committee to review the implementation of these service standards and provide an update and action plan to Committee in June 2021.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation took place with the Neighbourhood Ambassadors and the Tenants Voice Representatives in October 2019 and January 2021 - feedback from this is in the main body of this report.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Michelle Elliott – Housing Manager Email: <a href="mailto:michelle.elliott@stroud.gov.uk">michelle.elliott@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Customer Service Care Standard Appendix B – Equality and Diversity Service Standard Appendix C – Rent and Income Service Standard Appendix D – Anti Social Behaviour Service Standard Appendix E – Estate Management Service Standard Appendix F – Repairs Service Standard			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	No

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The Regulator for Social Housing requires Stroud District Council (SDC), as a social landlord to provide a detailed level of customer service standards that reflect the aspirations of SDC's tenants. This is in line with the Consumer standards and in particular the tenant involvement and empowerment standard.

## Agenda Item 5

- 1.2 Service Standards demonstrate that Tenant Services provide a clear and transparent service to SDC's tenants, leaseholders and residents. Those involved in this consultation felt the standards were still good but wished to strengthen them by making a number of additions (see para 3.3). The full amended standards are included in the appendices.
- 1.3 Tenant Services is committed to providing an excellent service to SDC's tenants. This is endorsed in the Stroud District Council Corporate Delivery Plan which states that the Council wishes to create, sustained, vibrant communities and in order to validate this, Tenant Services service standards should reflect the quality of services that we provide.
- 1.4 The service standards actively promote equal opportunities and access to the provision of Tenant Services, ensuring the Council can adapt to individuals needs and preferences. A recent commissioning of how we deliver resident involvement by ARK consultants is due to be reported back in the coming weeks.
- 1.5 Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the service standards were not submitted to Housing Committee for recommendations during 2020.

### **2.0 The Role of Stroud District Council – A Commitment to Communities**

- 2.1 Stroud District Council has a critical leadership role supporting and encouraging strong communities for the best possible quality of life, so that all can live well together. We are committed to developing a sustainable, proactive and respected relationship with our communities. This will be reflected in how our services are organised and delivered and the in two-way communication which works to meet the needs of all our communities and individuals who need our support.
- 2.2 The District Council's Tenant Services team aims to provide well-managed and relevant support for all our residents, focusing on those who need us most. Quality conversations and easy community access is at the heart of what we do, enabling our communities to engage with us in an efficient and effective way to access services but also promoting two way conversations that lead to improvements and contribute to priority setting.

### **3.0 The Impact and the implications of the Social Housing White Paper**

- 3.1 The Social Housing White Paper (2021) includes the Charter for Social Housing Residents outlining seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords including:
- i. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
  - ii. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.

- iii. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- iv. **To be treated with respect**, backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- v. **To have your voice heard by your landlord**, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
- vi. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
- vii. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

3.2 These commitments will form the direction of travel of services we provide and underpin these with future Strategies and policies across the service. A number are updates of the current consumer standards from the Regulator that we are already compliant with.

#### **4.0 Service Standards Reviewed**

4.1 Our Commitment

4.2 In line with the requirements of the White Paper the following service standards were reviewed by a group of involved tenants. Specific amendments were raised by the group (as detailed below) and, where appropriate, incorporated in the Service Standard documentation.

4.3 An action plan detailing the implementation of Service Standards, including the involvement of tenants in their monitoring and evaluation, will be brought forward to Housing Committee in June 2021

#### **5.0 Involved Tenants**

5.1 These Service Standards have been reviewed by our involved tenants. Stroud has had a long and successful relationship with involved tenants and their input into how we design and deliver services has proven invaluable. This positive relationship reflects our approach to involvement and meets the requirement of the regulator and many of our tenants.

5.2 Tenant involvement is however an ongoing relationship, involving support, encouragement and cultural change. In line with SDC commitment to tenant involvement and the Social Housing White Paper, refreshed tenant's involvement mechanism, which are fully representative of the tenancy profile, will be established over the coming months. Their work will include supporting and monitoring Service Standards

# Agenda Item 5

## 6.0 Key Revision

### 6.1 Customer Care

- *Incoming telephone calls*
  - Tenants request that for incoming telephone calls into Tenant Services the standard should reflect that calls will be answered by an appropriate member of staff or the tenant will be able to leave a message on the voicemail.
  - This is in place and reflected in the service standard.
- *Direct Line numbers*
  - Promote Direct Line numbers of officers.
  - This will be considered as part of a wider review of community access and will include a commitment to dealing with as many enquiries as possible at first point of contact.
- *Emails*
  - On receipt of an email an acknowledgement email should be sent advising that SDC will respond to their concerns within 10 working days.
  - This is now in place.
- *Reception Desk*
  - Sign should be displayed at the Council offices at Ebley Mill reception desk advising that tenant can ask for a private interview
  - This will be introduced when the Council offices at Ebley Mill reopens to the public
- *Background music*
  - To consider having background music in the reception area.
  - This will be considered when the Council offices at Ebley Mill reopens to the public

### 6.2 Allocations & Lettings

- *Use of PCs in Sheltered Accommodation*
  - Tenants request Information in this standard should be deleted as the use of PC's in sheltered schemes is no longer available. Support can be given by the Housing Advice team.
  - This is acknowledged and has been actioned

### 6.3 Equality & Diversity

- *Diversity profiling*
  - Profiling information on the diversity of SDC's tenants needs to be actioned as the service standard states we will monitor this aspect.
  - This will be progressed through the procurement of the new Housing Systems.

### 6.4 Rent & Income

- *Use of Plain English*
  - The service standard states that SDC letters are in plain English, however the specified involved tenants felt this was not the case. We could consider a focus group to audit the content of the standard letters.
  - This request will be implemented
- *Shelter Housing Service Charges*
  - Involved tenants have requested a breakdown of sheltered housing service charges per scheme to be published.
  - A breakdown will be sent out to all sheltered tenant's week commencing 1 March 2021 with their rent statements.

### 6.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

- *ASB Leaflets*
  - An ASB leaflet detailing the process and timescales should be shared with complainants.
  - This will be implemented

### 6.6 Estate Management

- *Schedules of works*
  - Promote planned schedules of works due on estates works in advance, enabling tenants to know when their estate may expect improvement works.
  - Consultation will take place when any changes are being considered on the grounds maintenance contract.

### 6.7 Energy Service

- *Energy Services*
  - Alternatives to the electric fan heaters currently provided as temporary emergency heating should be considered.
  - This will be reviewed and options brought back for discussion with tenant representatives.

### 6.8 Leaseholders

- *Leaseholder Forums*
  - Leaseholder Forums should be re-established
  - The re-establishment of Leaseholder forums will be considered over the next six months.

### 6.9 Planned & Cyclical Maintenance

## Agenda Item 5

- *Level Access Showers*
  - Delete the option of level access shower from the standard, as this is only offered if a referral is received from an Occupational Therapist.
  - This is acknowledged and the standard amended.

### 6.10 Repairs & Maintenance

- *Tenants Handbook*
  - Amend the standard to state that a tenant handbook can be given on request but is generally online.
  - This is acknowledged and the standard amended

## 7.0 **Conclusion**

7.1 It should be noted that the achieved Service Standards will have varied during 2020 due to COVID-19, where contingency measures will have taken place and processes may have been changed, whilst staff worked remotely and adjusted to differing priorities.

7.2 As we follow the Governments roadmap out of lockdown we will see a degree of normality returning in how we deliver services.

7.3 It is important that tenant led service standards and the implication for social housing providers of the Social Housing White paper will also be considered as part of a wider review of community access, including all residents of the district. Similarly, the Council's commitment to carbon reduction and energy efficiency (as reflected in its adoption of the Stroud District 2030 Strategy – Limiting, Adapting, Recovering and Responding in a Changing Climate) has implications across the district, including of course those who live in District Council managed properties. To this extent, service standards will regularly need to be reviewed and where necessary refreshed'.

## 8.0 **Implications**

### 8.1 **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any changes to service standards that require additional funding would need to be included in a budget proposal to Housing Committee and be approved by Council.

Lucy Clothier

Email: [lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

### 8.2 **Legal Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.



Lawyer, One Legal

Tel: 01684 272691

Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

### **8.3 Equality Implications**

An EqlA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

### **8.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## APPENDIX A



## Customer Care Service Standard

We will treat all tenants and leaseholders politely, fairly and professionally because we value and respect you. Our customer care standard sets out what you can expect when we have contact with you.

### **When you telephone us we will: -**

- Be helpful and courteous and aim to resolve your query at first contact.
- Answer your call within 25 seconds with a greeting including the name of the Team you have called and the name of the person answering your call, if appropriate.
- Tell you either the name and contact details of the person you are being re-directed to or the name and contact details of the team you are being re-directed to, if your query can't be handled by the person who answered the call.
- Offer to take a message if the appropriate person is not available and pass the message on to that person.
- Only use voicemail as a last resort.
- Answer all messages within 1 working day. If the member of staff you want to speak to is not available, we will let you know.
- Provide you with the opportunity to speak to us in the language of your choice, by using our translation facility.
- Make available a Minicom system to assist your call should you have a hearing impairment.

### **When you contact us by letter or e-mail we will: -**

- Reply to you fully within 10 working days. If we cannot respond fully in that time we will tell you who is dealing with your enquiry and when you can expect a full response.
- Reply to you in a way that is easy to understand, in your preferred language and format
- Keep a record of how you would like us to respond to you, either in person, by telephone or in writing

### **When you contact us by text we will: -**

- Fully respond to your enquiry within 10 working days.

### **When we visit you in your home we will: -**

- Make and keep an appointment with you, giving you the name, job title and contact details of the person who will visit you.
- Let you know if the person who is due to visit you can't make the appointment and offer you another date.
- Carry proof of identity and be respectful to you and to your home.
- Leave a calling card should you not be at home, giving details of why we visited you and who you should contact to re-arrange the appointment.

### **When you visit one of our offices we will: -**

- Ensure that the reception area is welcoming and that you have a comfortable environment to wait in, with seating and appropriate facilities.
- If you have an appointment, we aim not to keep you any longer than a maximum of five minutes before being seen.
- If you arrive without an appointment and you can't be seen immediately we will advise you of this and offer you an appointment at a later date with a named Officer.
- Try and resolve complaints there and then.
- Make sure the office is accessible.
- Offer you the opportunity to discuss your issue in a private interview room.
- Provide induction loops, arrange sign language facilities, interpreters or translation facilities if you require them. These may not be immediately available, so we may have to make an appointment for you at a later date.
- Ensure that your issue is dealt with fairly and efficiently by a trained member of staff.

### **If you wish to compliment, comment or complain about us we will: -**

- Let you know how to do this and value your contact.
- Reply to you fully within 10 working days. If we cannot respond fully in that time we will tell you who is dealing with your enquiry and when you can expect a full response.
- Ensure that compliments are shared with the relevant Officers and teams.

### **If we have not delivered a service to the agreed standard we will: -**

- Put the matter right within the timescale laid down in the relevant Service Standard.
- Investigate your complaint promptly.
- Send you a written apology where we're at fault.
- Learn from our mistakes and offer to involve you in, or advise you of the changes we intend to make as a result of your complaint.

## Agenda Item 5

- Provide you with information about making a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if you are not happy with how we have handled your complaint.
- Give a summary of all complaints to the Tenant Services Resident Scrutiny Panel for information and comment.

**To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:**

- % of complaints replied to within 10 working days.
- Average resident satisfaction out of 10 for how we handled the complaint.
- Number of complaints received.
- Number of compliments received.
- Details of changes we've introduced as a result of feedback.

APPENDIX B



## Equality and Diversity Service Standard

Recognising and respecting the diverse needs of our tenants and leaseholders we will provide services to meet these needs

**To achieve this, we will: -**

- **Monitor the diversity of tenants and leaseholders by:**
  - Keeping a record of the diverse make up of our tenants and leaseholders to help us to target and tailor our services to meet their needs.
  
- **Ensure our services are accessible to all tenants and leaseholders by:**
  - Making sure our Officers are accessible to you at a range of locations throughout the District and that our Offices are accessible.
  - Using language that is easily understood in your preferred choice of language in our letters and leaflets and providing written information in Braille, on CD or in large print as required.
  
- **Ensure our services treat all tenants and leaseholders fairly by:**
  - Making sure that we don't discriminate against anybody **in line with the protected characteristics contained within the equalities act 2010.**
  - Making sure our staff are aware of equality and diversity issues and work towards creating a workforce representative of the local population.
  - Monitoring our services, policies and procedures to see whether we are treating all tenants and leaseholders fairly, and adjust them if we find that they aren't.

## APPENDIX C



## Rent and other Income Collection Service Standard

We will provide an effective rent and service charge collection that maximises income. We will support tenants and leaseholders who have difficulty paying their rent and service charges

### To achieve this, we will:

- **Provide you with information about your rent and service charges, by:**
  - Explaining how much rent and other service charges you have to pay. If you claim benefits, we will tell you how much rent you are likely to have to pay each week.
  - Writing all our rents and arrears letters in plain language (English or other languages). These letters will be approved by the Communications and Equalities Service Development Group before they are used.
  - Giving you four weeks' notice in writing of any change to your rent (other than Housing Benefit changes).
  - Giving you secure on-line access to your rent account
  - Responding quickly to your notification of any change in circumstances you have (such as a bereavement) and advise you how this affects the amount of rent you will have to pay.
- **Provide you with ways of paying your rent and service charges which are convenient to you, by:**
  - Offering you the opportunity to pay your rent in one of the following ways:
    - Direct Debit
    - Standing Order
    - Post Office
    - by debit or credit card
    - via our website
    - by telephone
  - Offering advice to tenants to pay rent in ways that reduce our processing costs (for example by Direct Debit or via our website).
  - Where we have collected too much rent or service charge income from you, repaying you within 10 working days by your preferred method.

- **Taking a firm but fair approach to recovering rent and service charge arrears and other debts which are outstanding, by:**
  - Intervening at an early stage to prevent rent or service charge arrears from building up.
  - Helping you to claim housing benefit and council tax benefit and provide you with information about other benefits you may be entitled to.
  - Directing you to specialist agencies who provide benefits advice.
  - Directing you to money advice services that are provided by other agencies.
  - Striving to collect as much money owed to us as we possibly can and telling you how we performed.

**To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measures each year:**

- % of rental income collected.
- Number of tenants who were evicted for Rent Arrears.
- Number of tenants supported with additional Welfare benefits advice and financial inclusion support.

## APPENDIX D



## Anti-Social Behaviour Service Standard

We take an uncompromising stance towards anti-social behaviour. By this we mean behaviour which might disturb or intimidate you or spoil your quality of life. It is anything which interferes with the peaceful enjoyment of your home and surrounding area. We will encourage people to report incidents they experience or witness, so working together with other agencies we can tackle problems experienced by individuals, families and communities.

### To achieve this, we will:

- **Support you when you report an incident to us by: -**
  - Taking your complaint seriously and thoroughly investigating it.
  - Treating all information you give us in confidence and in accordance with legal requirements.
  - Providing you with written confirmation of your report and give you a unique case reference number.
  - Giving you the name and contact details of the member of staff who will deal with your case.
- **Support you when we investigate your complaint, by: -**
  - Responding within 24 hours of your complaint if it involves actual or threats of violence.
  - Interviewing you within 5 working days of your complaint, if your complaint doesn't involve violence or the threat of violence.
  - Putting your and your family's safety first. We will offer to meet you in an accessible, private and safe environment.
  - Giving you advice and guidance so you can make your own decisions.
  - Working with you to agree an action plan and monitor this on at least a monthly basis or more frequently in more serious cases.
  - Providing you with appropriate support, working with our partners and other agencies, including the Police.
  - Considering the full range of criminal and civil legal actions that may be taken against the individual(s) or group causing the problem.
  - Arranging for the installation of noise monitoring equipment in the case of complaints of noise nuisance.



- Providing observation sheets with guidance on recording the details of incidents. We will regularly review this information and agree on what action can be taken.
  - Arranging for any abusive obscene or threatening graffiti to be removed within 1 working day.
  - Offering you security improvements if your personal safety is at serious risk
  - Rehousing you if it is not possible for you to remain or return to your home
  - Identifying with you any other support needs you may have and discuss how these might be addressed.
  - Offering to transport and escort you to and from any court hearings if you are required to attend to give evidence.
  - Providing you with support while you are at Court by making sure you feel comfortable and protected, if you are either a victim or a witness.
  - Referring you to Victim Support, should you require it.
- **Treat you fairly if a complaint is made against you by: -**
    - Speaking with you within 10 working days of the complaint being made\*.
    - Informing you of the allegations being made against you and listening to your response\*.
    - Giving you the opportunity, if appropriate, to rectify your behaviour and get support\*.
    - Letting you know how we believe you have breached your tenancy or leasehold agreement.
    - Discussing with you options such as an Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, mediation or other options, before taking formal legal action\*.
    - Providing you with written notice of any legal action we intend to take against you and the reasons for that action\*.

***\*Except where there is violence or the threat of violence involved, when we will consider taking immediate legal action without notice. In this event you will have the opportunity to state your case in court.***

**To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:**

- % of all higher level cases of anti-social behaviour resolved
- Average satisfaction out of 10 with the way ASB complaints were dealt with.
- % of tenants who made a complaint about anti-social behaviour who are satisfied with our response to addressing the problem.

## APPENDIX E



## Estate Management Service Standard

We will deliver an estate management service to help our tenants and leaseholders live in homes and places they are proud of

### To achieve this, we will: -

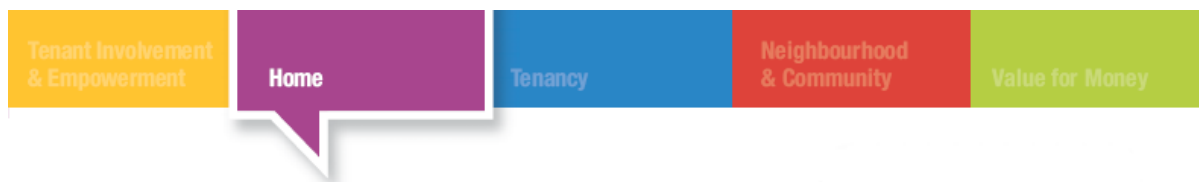
- **Undertake a schedule of estate inspections, which will:**
  - Include all of the areas where we own homes at least once every three months (monthly on larger estates) to make sure standards agreed with tenants, residents and other partners are being met.
  - Include garage sites with estate inspections.
  - Give all tenants and residents advance notice of inspections by publishing their dates in advance and inviting local people to attend.
  - Provide feedback on the issues raised and actions taken following estate inspections.
  - Inspect communal areas within blocks of flats at least once a month to ensure that they are safe and clean.
- **Consult you about environmental improvements or regeneration projects on your estate**
  - Survey garage users about their use of the site they lease from time to time.
  - Where the garages no longer serve a useful purpose, consult with the local community on a more beneficial use for the site.
- **Carry out work on our estates to ensure that they are safe and in a good condition, this includes:**
  - Removing any dangerous or substantial accumulations of litter on our land within 6 hours of identifying the problem or receiving a complaint. We will remove all other litter within 5 working days of identifying the problem or receiving a complaint.
  - Working with other Council Departments, Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to:
    - Investigate and resolve issues relating to abandoned vehicles within 28 days which may, in some cases, result in removal.
    - Maintain communal grassed areas, footpaths, roads, street lighting, sewers and drains.
  - Completing repairs to the communal areas of flats within 10 working days. Where the repair is an emergency repair we will complete this within 1 day

- Keeping the communal areas of blocks of flats clean and tidy.
  - Removing any obscene or offensive graffiti within 1 working day and all other graffiti within 5 working days.
  - Carrying out repairs to communal aerials and CCTV cameras within 2 working days.
  - Making sure gardens in empty council owned properties are kept tidy.
  - Quickly deal with any pest infestations within communal areas.
  - Trimming or removing trees that are hazardous within 28 days of being notified, unless the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order in which case an application to the Council's planning department must be made prior to works commencing.
  - Carrying out appropriate repairs to garages and their sites.
- **Ensure that tenants and residents do their bit to maintain the quality of the environment by:**
    - Investigating any breaches of Tenancy Agreements, making sure that tenants:
      - Maintain their gardens and hedges, keeping them tidy and free from rubbish.
      - Dispose of household, garden and recycling waste properly.
      - Park vehicles in proper parking spaces or on driveways with a dropped kerb crossing.
      - Do not allow dogs to roam the neighbourhood or foul in public places.
    - Making sure that the occupiers of former council homes maintain their gardens, where covenants allow.
    - Making sure that tenants and leaseholders keep communal areas in blocks free from rubbish.

**To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measure each year:**

- % of priority 1 and 2 inspections carried out with a tenant or representative.
- 10/10 satisfaction of new tenants with the service received.
- We will survey our residents once a year to find out the % of residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

## APPENDIX F



## Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard

We will ensure that all our homes are of a good standard. We will provide a responsive repairs service that achieves high standards of quality, safety and tenant satisfaction and a planned maintenance service that helps ensure that our homes remain in good condition

### To achieve this, we will:

- **Provide a responsive repair service that:**
  - Allows you to report emergency repairs to us 24 hours a day, every day.
  - Attends and makes safe all emergency repairs within 24 hours of them being reported. We will complete any follow up work within 3 working days.
  - Completes urgent repairs within 5 working days from the date you report them. We will offer you an appointment, confirm the appointment and the work to be carried out by letter, sent to you within 1 working day of the receipt of your request. To remind you of your appointment we will send you a text or phone you the day before.
  - Completes routine repairs within 20 working days from the date you report them. We will offer you an appointment, confirm the appointment and the work to be carried out by letter, sent to you within 1 working day of the receipt of your request. To remind you of your appointment we will send you a text or phone you the day before.
  - Lets you know, by phoning you, if our contractor is unable to make the appointment we've arranged with you.
  - Gives you a clear written description of the work our contractor will undertake
  - Completes all repairs during the first visit. Where this is not possible the contractor will arrange another appointment to complete any follow up work.
  - Leaves your home in a clean and tidy condition after carrying out repairs.
  - Completes all repairs to communal areas within 10 working days.
  - Returns within 2 working days if you're not completely satisfied with the quality of your repair.
  - Recharges repairs to tenants when they are the tenants' responsibility.
  - Ensures an insurance assessor is appointed, if accidental damage over £500 is caused to your property while repairs are being carried out. If the damage is less than £500 we will liaise with the contractor to ensure that you are compensated.
  - Consults with all affected leaseholders before we start repairs to communal areas, unless the work is minor or an emergency repair.

- Gives you a copy of a repairs handbook which explains our repair priorities and target timescales.
- **Provide a planned maintenance service that:**
  - Services your gas or oil heating appliance each year.
  - Tests the mains electrical supply to your home and the electric system within your home every 10 years.
  - Publishes details of our planned maintenance and improvement programme each year.
  - Advises you in writing 6 weeks before work is scheduled to be undertaken to your home.
  - Provides you with a choice of fittings and finishes when we replace kitchens and front and back external doors.
- **Our contractors will:**
  - Wear a recognisable uniform, carry an identity card which they will show you.
  - Treat your home and possessions with respect.
  - Treat you in a courteous and respectful manner.
  - Let you know when they have completed the work and are leaving your home.
  - Leave a calling card if you're not in when they call, giving you our contact details.
- **Ask you what you think of our services at least once a year and use what you tell us to help improve those services.**

**To keep you informed about how well we're doing we will publish the following performance measures each year:**

- % of tenants satisfied with our responsive repairs service.
- % of tenants satisfied with our planned maintenance service.
- % of responsive repairs completed within timescale.
- % of repairs completed at the first visit.
- % of gas central heating appliances serviced during the year.

This page is intentionally left blank

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO**

**8 APRIL 2021**

**6**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>CLEANER ESTATES STRATEGY 2021-2024</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	For Housing Committee to agree that the strategy is fit for purpose and that a detailed action plan is to be presented to Housing Committee in June 2021.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b>  <b>a) Adopt the Cleaner Estates Strategy</b>  <b>b) Agree that a detailed action plan to deliver the strategy is presented to Housing Committee in June 2021.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation has taken place with the Tenancy Management Team, involved tenants, Community Services colleagues and the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee			
<b>Report Author</b>	Kevin Topping Head of Housing Services Email: <a href="mailto:kevin.topping@stroud.gov.uk">kevin.topping@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix one - Cleaner Estates Strategy 2021-2024			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	Yes

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Tenant Services Cleaner Estate Strategy is a new piece of work and reflects a commitment to improve the quality and cleanliness of where people live and somewhere they can be proud of.
- 1.2 It aims to ensure that domestic waste, recycling, food waste and fly tipping are managed effectively and efficiently in partnership with our corporate colleagues, stakeholders, tenants and residents ensuring our estates are of a high standard and a place where our tenants and residents are proud to live and we as a local authority are proud to serve.
- 1.3 Stroud District Council has a critical leadership role supporting and encouraging strong communities for the best possible quality of life, so that all can live well

## Agenda Item 6

together. We are committed to developing a sustainable, proactive and respected relationship with our communities. This will be reflected in how our services are organised and delivered and the two-way communication which works to meet the needs of all our communities and individuals who need our support.

- 1.4 The key to successful delivery of this strategy is collaborative consultation and the development of specific standards around levels of cleanliness including frequency of cleaning regime and a review to ensure these standards are being met.
- 1.5 The reporting of performance will be a critical part of the transparency of service delivery and also a solid gauge on resident satisfaction which has been poor in this area. The aspirations of this strategy reflect the need to do better not only in our communally served residential blocks but the wider district. These reports will be presented annually to tenants and residents and quarterly to elected members responsible for reporting on service performance to Housing Committee
- 1.6 We have commissioned advice through independent specialists to allow us to better understand and strengthen tenant involvement and we will continue to develop and review this.
- 1.7 The Regulator for Social Housing requires landlords as part of the Neighbourhood and Community Standard (One of four regulatory consumer standards for social housing) to ensure their neighbourhood's and communal spaces are kept clean and safe. In addition, landlords should co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.
- 1.8 There is a statutory Health & Safety requirement for all landlords who own and manage communal areas to ensure that they are regularly inspected and are free of any debris or hazard. Tenant Services undertake these formal inspections on a monthly basis, when carrying out Fire Risk Assessments and additional ad hoc inspections depending on particular raised issues either by the landlord, stakeholders or residents.
- 1.9 Working together across Council services and linking policies such as the waste management policy (agreed at Environment committee in February 2021) enable the 'one Council' approach to deliver excellent services to our communities.
- 1.10 The commitment to become more effective and efficient is mirrored in the relationships between Tenant Services and Community Services within the Council's Communities Directorate in particular with health and wellbeing supporting objectives. In order to deliver the best possible services in our estates, there must be effective internal working arrangements which properly align. The collaborative work already undertaken and supported by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Community Services reflects this.



### 2.0 Where are we now?

- 2.1 The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are still being felt and the number of people who are still working from home or are at home as a result of lockdown is leading to increased amounts of waste being generated in the home environment with a significant rise in fly tipping across the district becoming an unfortunate and worrying side effect.
- 2.2 The ability of officers to effectively manage the situation has been significantly impacted by the “stay at home/work from home if you can” directive and despite robust risk assessments the genuine concern of officers regarding direct contact with the public and covid-19 infection has somewhat staggered our ability to tackle issues more directly. As lockdown measures ease in the coming months and following the Governments roadmap we will start to see improvements in the short term as officers are able to increase engagement across estates.

### 3.0 Where we want to be?

- 3.1 This strategy sets out the expectations and aspirations we have not only as a responsible and respected social landlord but also to be an exemplar authority in its delivery of services by putting our communities at the heart of what we do. The ability to transition from a Tenant Services only approach to a ‘one Council’ approach working together with our communities is, some may consider radical and others that this is expected, we prefer to believe the latter.
- 3.2 The Housing White Paper includes the Charter for Social Housing Residents outlining seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords including:
  - 1. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
  - 2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
  - 3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
  - 4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
  - 5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.

## Agenda Item 6

6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

3.3 These commitments will form the direction of travel of services we provide and underpin these with future Strategies and policies across the service. A number are updates of the current consumer standards from the Regulator that we are already compliant with.

### **4.0 Key principles and objectives of the Strategy**

4.1 This Strategy reflects the need to improve services to our neighbourhoods in how we deal with domestic waste and fly-tipping on our estates and in our communities.

4.2 This work is fundamentally linked to aligning and supporting colleagues and stakeholders within the Communities directorate delivering effective waste management and cleaner estates. It is based on four key principles and four delivery Objectives:

#### **4.3 Key principles:**

- A clear rationale for a regular process of review and reporting to confirm waste is being managed.
- Clear objectives for the removal and management of fly tipping with transparent performance reporting to ensure that objectives are being met and remain relevant.
- Engagement and ownership from Communities.
- Clearer links between the Council's estates and its district wide objectives reflecting the principles of a One Council approach with Communities and Elected Members' interest in functional, financial and social terms.

#### **4.4 Objectives:**

- Excellent customer service including satisfaction.
- Sustainable and stronger greener communities.
- Partnership working.
- Stronger enforcement for persistent offenders of fly tipping including condition of gardens, communal areas and open spaces with other items such as bulky rubbish (sofas white goods etc.).

### **5.0 Action Plan**

5.1 An action plan for delivery will be presented to Housing Committee in June 2021 should this strategy be agreed, outlining what and when consultation and feedback takes place, where the service touch points are and who is owning each step including regeneration projects.

- 5.2 This plan will be made available on our website (following committee approval) with updates provided on a quarterly basis and will also feature in our tenants' newsletter and notice boards in communal blocks. Performance information will be shared with elected members responsible for reporting on service performance on a quarterly basis and will form part of their feedback report to Housing Committee.
- 5.3 An annual progress report will be added to the Housing Committee work programme for further oversight and governance.

### **6.0 Implications**

#### **6.1 Financial Implications**

The cost of unplanned waste disposal including fly tipping has increased in recent years, adding pressure to the financial position of the HRA. This strategy seeks to control this additional spend, as well as increase recycling.

Lucy Clothier  
Email: [lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **6.2 Legal Implications**

Legislation exists to help the Council manage its estates and tackle waste offences such as fly-tipping. In appropriate cases, relevant Council Services can undertake enforcement action against individuals where there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the commission of waste offences. This includes tenancy enforcement action against Council tenants.

Lawyer, One Legal  
Tel: 01684 272691 Email: [Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **6.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

#### **6.4 Environmental Implications**

There may be a continued increase in fly tipping and a small number of cases of bad behaviour and non-compliance, in the short term as we align work streams and colleagues however, these will be directly addressed as outlined in the strategy and further detail in the action plan.



---

# Cleaner Estates Strategy 2021-2024

---

April 2021

---

Tenant Services

---

**Last updated:** *March 2021*

**Next document review by:** March 2024

**Reviewed by:** Kevin Topping Head of Housing Services

**Approved by:** *Housing Committee*

## **Contents**

1. Key Principles and Objectives	Page 2
2. Where do we need to be	Page 3
3. How are we going to get there	Page 3
4. Our Offer and Approach	Page 4-5
5. Partnership Working	Page 5
6. Next Steps	Page 6

## Agenda Item 6

**Cleaner Estates Strategy 2021** This Strategy is a strong commitment to improve the quality and cleanliness of where people live somewhere they can be proud of

It reflects the need to improve services to our neighbourhoods in how we deal with domestic waste and fly-tipping on our estates and in our communities.

This work is fundamentally linked to aligning across Stroud District Council (SDC) to delivering effective waste management and cleaner estates. The importance of a clean and safe environment cannot be underplayed linking directly to what communities want and need

Collaboration, communication and feedback are critical areas to concentrate on, additionally learning opportunities of what worked well and what did not can be transferred to future work streams and engagement.

### **The Charter for Social Housing Residents**

The Charter for Social Housing Residents sits at the heart of the Housing White paper and outlines seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords.

1. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. **To know how your landlord is performing**, including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect**, backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord**, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

### **Where do we need to be?**

SDC has a critical leadership role supporting and encouraging strong communities for the best possible quality of life, so that all can live well together. We are committed to developing a sustainable, proactive and respected relationship with our communities. This will be reflected in how services are organised and the delivered and the in two-way communication which works to meet the needs of all our communities and individuals who need our support. We are committed to being a Community driven Council – delivering services in partnership – Putting communities at the heart of what we do.

To achieve this in the context of council owned estates it will require a new way of thinking that facilitates delivery of efficient services working collaboratively across the district. The Communities directorate will draw all of these elements from within and corporately.

### **How are we going to get there?**

Implementation of the Strategy will require some investment of time, and available expertise. A range of regeneration projects will be carried out within a programme managed by SDC's Contract Services which will be identified in the future action plan.

### **Key Principles and Objectives of the Strategy**

#### **Key principles:**

- A clear rationale for a regular process of review and reporting to confirm waste is being managed.
- Clear objectives for the removal and management of fly tipping with transparent performance reporting to ensure that objectives are being met and remain relevant.
- Engagement and ownership from Communities.
- Clearer links between the Council's estates and its district wide objectives reflecting the principles of a One Council approach with Communities and Elected Members' interest in functional, financial and social terms.

#### **Objectives**

Following feedback from tenants and residents outlined in the Tenants and Residents (STAR) survey at the end of 2019, satisfaction levels were a key factor in how Tenant Services were perceived as a landlord including conditions and cleanliness of estates and grounds maintenance. Therefore, the drivers for this strategy are set out below:

- Excellent customer service including satisfaction.
- Sustainable and stronger greener communities.
- Greater and more effective Partnership working internally and externally.
- Stronger enforcement for persistent offenders of fly tipping including condition of gardens, communal areas and open spaces with other items such as bulky rubbish (sofas white goods etc.).

#### **Building blocks**

Underpinning the key principles and delivery objectives, five important building blocks have been identified to help this be delivered

**A) Smart investment** – Well targeted projects will identify the type of changes required to enable a cleaner environment. This will be done in consultation with residents such as the location and accessibility of bin stores in communal blocks (already successfully applied in both the North and South of the district). Projects will need to be suitably planned and financed with appropriate budget, this will be linked to the Asset Management Plan and underpinned by the CN2030 commitment.

## Agenda Item 6

- B) Resource** – The Neighbourhood Management Team will commence a programme of engagement with residents over the issues of waste management and will draw in support from Community Services including health and wellbeing partners. The detail will be outlined in the action plan for this strategy.
- C) Resident engagement and satisfaction** – New performance measures linked to resident satisfaction will be agreed in line with the new housing white paper proposals. These measures will be published on our website and in the tenants' newsletter.
- D) Joined up working with stakeholders** – This includes engagement with ward councilors and town and Parish councils as well as other relevant agencies providing support to residents. This will empower communities at a local level to influence projects and investment that work for each rather than a catch all approach.
- E) Effective benchmarking** - With other organisations to learn and adopt the things that work well and share any good learning we have to support other organisations. We are already a part of the Housing Quality Network (HQN), Housemark and the Chartered Institute for Housing (CIH), opportunities always exist with local and national landlords for increased learning.

### Our Commitment

Housing Management teams will:

- Hold a Community Planning Event once a year involving stakeholders, internally and externally to identify areas that would benefit the most from community investment and a scheduled programme of works and activity that fits in with the financial viability of projects and the Asset management strategy for planned works over the next 5 years.
- Carry out an annual Star Survey that looks at satisfaction with the Neighbourhood as a place to live (this can be broken down to reflect profiling including protected characteristics to develop action plans).
- Teams to provide a balanced triple track approach of prevention, support and enforcement including the use of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) which are issued to individuals aged 16 or over who are suspected of engaging in unreasonable conduct which is having a detrimental effect, of a persistent or continuing nature, on the quality of life of those in the locality. This will begin to embed improved behaviours from those who are exhibiting and carrying out unacceptable practices.

### Our Approach

Our approach is to ensure that there is a visible and proactive Tenancy Management Service within the community dealing with basic issues of tenancy conduct and support and ensuring the provision of on-the-spot assistance and advice with issues of concern to our tenants. This is achieved by our “Can’t Do” versus “Won’t Do” approach. Where tenants are having difficulty in maintaining their tenancy satisfactorily and this is because they “can’t do”, we will ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable them to sustain their tenancy. Where tenants are breaching their tenancy



regulations including conditions of gardens or communal areas and this is down to them choosing not to comply with the terms of their tenancy and clearly “Won’t Do” then this will be dealt with using the appropriate enforcement powers and procedures.

### **Tenant and member Involvement**

Tenant Services will work with tenants and residents and stakeholders to consider what will work best for each area as a one size fits all may not be appropriate in all cases Elected Members working for and on behalf of the communities that they serve are a critical part of the challenge as part of the community approach , in current times this is a little challenging but with the objectives clearly agreed and set out through a period of consultation then implementation of activities can be rolled out.

### **Fire Safety - Communal Areas**

In line with the Housing White paper and Grenfell disaster learning we will continue liaising with Gloucestershire fire and Rescue Service working in partnership to reduce and remove risk in and around communal blocks not only through our regular fire risk assessments but also an action plan to improve awareness and take punitive action or ensure support networks are in place where appropriate to ensure that safety is a primary concerns for all residents and not just the landlord or fire service.

### **Partnership Working**

We have a partnership with Gloucestershire fire and rescue service with the aim to reduce the occurrence of domestic fires and arson and to proactively promote fire safety to our Council House tenants. We continue to deliver this by encouraging active participation by the fire service in our estate walkabouts, routine referral of vulnerable tenants in order that appropriate fire prevention advice can be delivered and involvement with particularly vulnerable customers to fit appropriate fire prevention equipment. A couple of examples have been to install specialist fire alarms for hard of hearing and the provision of fire resistant bedding. We have a fire and rescue liaison officer based in Community Services to enable closer working relationships.

### **Risks**

If this area is not properly resourced and invested in this may lead to uncontrolled budget spend, reduce satisfaction and our estates become less desirable areas which may impact on the ability to drive creative and positive communities solutions and a place where people enjoy living and take pride in their neighbourhoods.

### **Joined up activities**

Joined up activities will help the Council to:

- Empower communities, stimulating debate and engendering civic pride; This requires ongoing engagement with tenants and residents to move some of the decision making in communities to the people who actually live there.
- Improve the economic wellbeing of an area; Including the potential for local people to be involved in active regeneration projects via small to medium employers.
- Increase partnership working and the sharing of knowledge; what others are doing in communities such as health practitioners, the Police and community groups.

## Agenda Item 6

- Improve environmental sustainability; The cleaner and greener we make estates will have a short term financial cost but long term, when we get things right a reducing cost, Pride, awareness and understanding through educational messages of CN2030 needs to be delivered consistently.
- Align and prioritise resources to deliver exceptional services for tenants and residents in Stroud District. This links directly to the action plan and ownership.

### **Next Steps**

Draw up an action plan containing schedules for consultation and feedback, ownership and responsibilities and activities that are SMART in line with this strategy. This plan would be presented to Junes Housing Committee (2021) and then rolled out if agreed. This plan would be subject to some flexibility from 2022 depending on the feedback from consultation as outlined previously. The action plan will be a living document and bi-annual reporting by way of briefings will be set in the work plan. If there are significant changes requiring committee approval such as increased financial investment, these will be scheduled accordingly into the committee cycle.

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 APRIL 2021

**7**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>UPDATED TENANT SERVICES ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POLICY</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	For Housing Committee to note the updates to the Tenant Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to adopt the updated Tenant Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation has taken place with Community Services, Tenancy Management Team, involved tenants, Health & Wellbeing, Customer Services and Stroud local policing team.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Kevin Topping - Head of Housing Services Email: <a href="mailto:kevin.topping@stroud.gov.uk">kevin.topping@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>				
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 – Tenant Services Anti–Social Behaviour Policy, March 2021			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	No

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This policy provides an up to date approach to the management of Anti-Social Behaviour in line with the new Social Housing White Paper 2020. It sets out a new Charter for Social Housing Residents.

**1.2** Stroud District Council (SDC), is committed to working to make all housing estates and properties owned by SDC, to be places where people want to live safely, peacefully and in harmony both now and in the future. We recognise that people being and feeling safe in their home is important to how they feel about where they live.

**2.0 The Housing White Paper’s Charter for Social Housing Tenants**

**2.1** The Charter for Social Housing Residents sits at the heart of The Social Housing White Paper > It outlines seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords:

## Agenda Item 7

1. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

### **3.0 Regulator for Social Housing**

- 3.1 The Regulator for Social Housing implicitly directs landlords “to work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.” Therefore, Stroud District Council has a statutory obligation to effectively manage and resolve incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour. Further consultation is underway by the government to clarify the roles of agencies involved in tackling anti-social behaviour and signpost tenants to those agencies who can give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with anti- social behaviour.

### **3.0 Anti-Social Behaviour - Our Commitment**

- 3.1 Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Nuisance effectively is a high priority for the Council’s Tenant Services Team.
- 3.2 Our Commitment is to tackle ASB swiftly and effectively making use of legal powers where appropriate. There is a legal process to repossess a home or demote a tenancy within the Housing Act 1996, however, this is a serious step and one that requires sufficient and robust evidence presented to a court which is not always forthcoming from victims of ASB. We always seek a local resolution where possible and the intervention of mediation and acceptable behaviour contracts (ABC’s) between parties in most low level cases up to restorative justice and injunction in more serious cases.
- 3.3 We will work to improve customer satisfaction with our response and management to complaints of ASB by taking a solution focused approach in a reasonable and proportionate manner.
- 3.4 In order to achieve this, we will maintain and improve strong working relationships with other agencies, including local neighbourhood police teams, Mental health

teams, support services, Community Services and Health and Wellbeing teams. Repeated incidents of ASB across the district are fed into the Community Safety Partnership to evaluate trends and identify positive actions to resolve ASB.

- 3.5 We will work with partners to develop pro-active methods of working, committed to addressing both the underlying causes of ASB and the specific concerns within our communities including learning from others who are performing well in this field (Benchmarking).
- 3.6 It is understandable that many tenants would like strong and immediate to be taken against ASB. While the District Council is absolutely committed to tackle effectively with such matters, our response must at all times be measured and proportionate. For example, a neighbour's dog barking or children playing in their garden is not grounds for eviction
- 3.7 All complaints must be investigated thoroughly and this additionally requires time to do so, especially when complex issues are involved such as mental health and criminality, these areas require input from the respective professionals in order that we achieve the best outcome for everyone involved and we offer viable solutions rather than trying to put everything to a court.

#### 4. **ASB current position – The Impact of Covid-19 restrictions**

- 4.1 During the lockdown from March 2020, there was a significant upturn in reported noise nuisance cases of ASB across the district, (jumping from 13 cases in the period December 2019 to February 2020 to 110 between March and June 2020)) mainly caused by issues of people being at home either by choice or not (such as being furloughed), the restrictions around lockdown were not helped as the access to monitoring equipment (Matron devices) was not as readily available as it normally would be due to matters of sanitising the equipment after each use.
- 4.2 Additionally, the lockdown restrictions around stay at home made it difficult to investigate cases by telephone and a number of instances that could have been managed quickly ran longer than they should have, this naturally led to an increase in complaints. As the roadmap is now clearer we have been able to tackle ASB more directly and will continue to do so with a dedicated officer managing the higher level cases to ensure consistency is applied.

#### 5.0 **ASB Total Reported Cases requiring investigation/action**

<b>2018</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>193</b>

## Agenda Item 7

### **6.0 Consultation and Tenants' voice**

- 6.1 The revisions to this policy are based on ongoing dialogue by the Council's Tenancy Services team with residents (particularly those directly affected by ASB), the neighbourhood wardens service and partner agencies, including Gloucestershire Police. It should be noted that Policing partners were so impressed with the policy that they have requested a copy for their use and awareness moving forward which is a great indictment on the hard work that goes into this field.
- 6.2 Officers have worked particular closely with a number of engaged tenants and tenant representatives. Tenants involvement is important and discussions with tenants about the effectiveness of action to tackle ASB will be ongoing

### **7.0 The Updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

- 7.1 The updated ASB Policy, (Appendix 1) sets out the management activities and tools to work towards resolving the Anti-Social Behaviour, meeting the needs of victims, taking action against perpetrators and supporting community.

### **7.2 Revisions and additions to the policy include:**

- Acts of ASB towards elected members being included within the policy in relation to any duties carried out linked to the Council. (Point 2 - our Commitment).
- Tenants and residents who have been impacted by anti-social behaviour in their communities including conditions of gardens (e.g. of vehicles either fully constructed or dismantled and bulky items including white goods) and fly-tipping as a source of ASB, the service is looking to expand its abilities to take further action with the use of Community Protection Notices (CPN's) in liaison with Community Services colleagues and one legal.
- Drug dealing and or substance misuse as high risk ASB
- The Impacts on communities including conditions of gardens (e.g. of vehicles either fully constructed or dismantled and bulky items including white goods) and fly-tipping as a source of ASB
- Take the appropriate steps to investigate and address allegations of ASB in an expedient, joined up manner.
- Details around the activation and use of the community trigger
- When vulnerable persons are identified, there will be a coordinated multi agency framework of support (if required) approach, which will be considered and applied.
- The victim of ASB will be given an Action Plan, detailing the actions to be taken to resolve the ASB with the appropriate review period.

- Vexatious complaints (unacceptable behaviour and unreasonably persistent complaint behaviour)
- Why and how we close cases

7.3 This policy will form a template for a corporate Anti- Social Behaviour Policy which will be delivered by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Community Services from September 2021

### **8.0 Conclusion**

8.1 Housing Committee is asked to adopt the updated Tenant Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

### **9.0 Implications**

#### **9.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Lucy Clothier

Email: [lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **9.2 Legal Implications**

Section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) requires local housing authorities to have in place:

- (1) a policy in relation to anti-social behaviour; and
- (2) procedures for dealing with occurrences of anti-social behaviour.

Section 218A (4) of the Act requires that the landlord must from time to time keep the policy and procedures under review and when appropriate publish a revised statement. It is understood that the previous policy was dated August 2017 and therefore the updated policy is required in order to fulfil the above statutory duty.

Lawyer, One Legal

Tel: 01684 272691 Email: [Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **9.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

#### **9.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

APPENDIX 1



---

# Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy 2021

---

Tenant Services

---

Topping, Kevin

---

**Last updated:** March 2021

**Next document review by:** January 2024

**Reviewed by:** Kevin Topping – Head of Housing Services

**Approved by:** Housing Committee



## **Contents**

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Our Commitment	Page 3
3. The Housing White Paper	Page 5
4. What is Anti-Social Behaviour	Page 6
5. The Clients Obligation	Page 7
6. Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour	Page 7
7. ASB Investigation	Page 9
8. National Situation	Page 11
9. Vexatious Complaints	Page 12
10. Data Protection	Page 12
11. Monitoring Performance	Page 12

# Agenda Item 7

## 1. Introduction

Stroud District Council (SDC), is committed to working to make all housing estates and properties owned by SDC, to be places where people want to live safely, peacefully and in harmony both now and in the future. We recognise that people being and feeling safe in their home is important to how they feel about where they live.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Nuisance is essential to achieving this outcome. We aim through this policy to prevent and reduce harm caused by ASB to individuals and communities.

The recent White Paper (see Sect 3) specifically requires providers of social housing to:

- Provide quality, safe environments free from crime & anti-social behaviour
- Feel protected and empowered by a regulatory regime and a culture of transparency, accountability, decency and service befitting the intentions and traditions of social housing

This policy is being updated to ensure SDC can to deliver these commitments and to work in partnership with its tenants and partner agencies to continually improve in order that tenants, neighbourhoods and communities are safe, sustainable and positive places to live and grow

## 2. Our Commitment

We are committed to tackle ASB swiftly and effectively making use of legal powers where appropriate This policy's priorities are:

- To tackle ASB swiftly and effectively making use of legal powers where appropriate.
- To improve customer satisfaction with our response and management to complaints of ASB.
- Taking a solution focused approach to tackle ASB in a reasonable and proportionate manner.
- Tenant involvement and empowerment to influence standards, enforcement and the promotion of good practice in estate management
- To maintain and improve strong working relationships with other agencies, including local neighbourhood police teams, Mental health teams, support services, Community Services and Health and Wellbeing teams.
- Repeated incidents of ASB across the district will be fed into the Community Safety Partnership to evaluate trends and identify positive actions to resolve ASB.
- To develop pro-active methods of working, committed to addressing both the underlying causes of ASB and the specific concerns within our communities including learning from others who are performing well in this field (Benchmarking).
- To reduce the re-offending of ASB within the same household.
- Support all tenants to sustain their tenancies.

This Policy applies to staff, tenants, leaseholders, tenants' representatives such as a family member, contractors, councillors, partners or agents that are subjected to abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour (including hate behaviour) whilst working or acting on behalf of the Council.

### **What we will do**

#### ***High risk ASB; (Ref S3)***

Contact will be made with the complainant and perpetrator within 24 hours or the next working day if the incident is reported on a Friday or a Bank Holiday. Advice will be provided by the out of hours' officer to contact the Police directly if there is any threat to life.

#### ***All other ASB;***

Contact will be made with the complainant and perpetrator within 5 working days. This will include reports made by the Police or other statutory or voluntary organisations.

The Council will determine if an ASB activity is occurring working closely with the complainant; advising how the ASB can be resolved. If at any stage of investigating the ASB complaint, the complainant rejects the options being given to resolve this matter, the ASB case may be closed.

*Please note when general ASB is being reported, the Council will assess each complaint and work with the person or persons to establish a common sense, reasonable and proportionate solution.*

### **Purpose of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

Stroud District Council has a critical leadership role supporting and encouraging strong communities for the best possible quality of life, so that all can live well together. We are committed to developing a sustainable, proactive and respected relationship with our communities. This will be reflected in how our services are organised and delivered and the two-way communication which works to meet the needs of all our communities and individuals who need our support.

The Council aims to ensure that its Tenants, Leaseholders and Shared Owners live peacefully in their homes, sustained communities and estates.

SDC is clear about the standard of behaviour it expects from its tenants; whether unintentional or deliberate, they must not commit, or allow their families to commit, acts of ASB towards other tenants or residents, people in the local area, or SDC staff, contractors or elected members in relation to any duties linked to the Council. If ASB takes place it may lead to actions being taken against them and or their tenancy.

## Agenda Item 7

This policy will ensure SDC offers relevant support and advice to Tenants, Shared Owners and Leaseholders, enabling them to understand their responsibilities regarding acceptable behaviour relating to themselves, their household and their visitors.

The policy will ensure SDC offers the appropriate levels of support to victims of Anti-Social Behaviour.

### **2.1 Scope**

This includes:

- Behaviour by tenants, groups of tenants, members of their household or their visitors, which would generally be considered to cause annoyance, nuisance or disturbance to other people in the area.
- Tenants and residents who have been impacted by anti-social behaviour in their communities including conditions of gardens (e.g. of vehicles either fully constructed or dismantled and bulky items including white goods) and fly-tipping as a source of ASB,

The service is looking to expand its abilities to take further action with the use of Community Protection Notices (CPN's) in liaison with Community Services colleagues and legal Services colleagues.

### **3. The Housing White Paper**

The Charter for Social Housing Residents sits at the heart of the Housing White paper and outlines seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords.

1. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

## 4. What is Anti-Social Behaviour

ASB is defined under s105 of the Anti- Social Behaviour Crime and Police Act 2014 as:

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

Anti-Social Behaviour can cover a wide range of behaviours and activities. The Council takes the view that Anti-Social Behaviour are acts which interfere with a person or persons' peace, enjoyment and comfort. Including acts which cause a nuisance, annoyance, disturbance, harassment and or violence of one or more persons; this will include members of the same household and or their visitors including the locality of the property.

We define ASB in two categories – High or Low.

The following behaviours are examples of high risk of anti-social behaviour:

- Threat to life.
- Assault.
- Hate crime.
- Safeguarding matters including child neglect.
- Drug dealing and or substance misuse.

The above is not a definitive list - each complaint /allegation is considered on a case by case basis with reference to the nature and extent of the alleged ASB

The following behaviours are examples of low risk anti-social behaviour:

- Graffiti and other forms of vandalism and damage (unless offensive, racist or identifying individuals in which case action is taken to remove within 4 hours following notification).
- Animal nuisance (fouling, pets out of control).
- Fly tipping (unless a health hazard then this would be escalated for action as soon as possible).
- General noise nuisance (if significant intervention from Health and Wellbeing colleagues may be required).

*The above is not an exhaustive list.*

## Agenda Item 7

### a. **Activity - Which is not Considered ASB**

There are certain activities which the Council does not class as ASB, this is likely to include:

- Cooking smells.
- The use of unallocated parking spaces.
- Every day living noises.
- Home improvements being carried out at a reasonable time of the day and for a reasonable period of time.
- Children playing in their home or garden at reasonable times of the day.
- Normal vehicle noises.
- Babies crying.
- Dogs barking intermittently.

*Please note the Council will expect the tenant to speak with their neighbour(s) on such matters in the first instance before making contact with Tenant Services, as these types of activity will not be investigated as ASB.*

### **5. The Tenant's Obligation**

Tenants and residents must comply with the terms of their contractual agreements and show due consideration to their neighbours, their household members and their visitors, and must not commit or allow the committing of any acts of ASB.

Where minor disputes exist between neighbours, as a general rule the Council would not intervene; The Council recognises that neighbours do not necessarily get on with each other but the expectation is, these relationships should be managed between the parties concerned.

To follow the advice given by the Council to resolve the ASB; if the tenant chooses not to follow the advice given, the ASB case will be closed.

The exception to this is where the issue is more serious, such as a hate crime, which can be classified as ASB and there is a defined victim and perpetrator.

### **6. Reporting anti-social behaviour**

Victims and witnesses to acts of anti-social behaviour committed on our estates can report it to us:

- Reporting through the Council's website: [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)
- in person by speaking to a member of staff directly (subject to any pandemic or arising restrictions).
- By telephone (subject to any pandemic or arising restrictions).
- Written correspondence.
- e-mail: [housing.management@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:housing.management@stroud.gov.uk)
- Though a third party (e.g. friend, councillor or relative).

- In person at Ebley Mill Council office (office opening hours permitting and by appointment(s) only).

### **6.1 Assessing ASB**

SDC will carry out a full assessment to determine whether an activity is ASB; this means tabulating behaviour, the impact of the behaviour and harm caused to the victim.

The Council will:

- Listen to and record every report of defined ASB.
- Provide an action plan to every victim of defined ASB.
- Provide regular updates to victims on a case management basis.
- Take the appropriate steps to investigate and address allegations of ASB in an expedient, joined up manner.
- Carry out a risk assessment(s) and or to notify the other relevant statutory or voluntary agencies if the ASB has been proven.

*Please note due to the complexity of certain ASB cases, resolving these may take some time; the victim will be advised of this, as the case progresses.*

The Council is committed to using a wide range of measures to prevent and tackle ASB by:

- Fully explaining the Tenancy Agreement to our new and existing tenants using plain English (or the preferred first language of the person where possible).
- Using a wide range of measures to address ASB including, mediation,
- referrals to a specialist support agencies informal interviews, formal warnings, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.
- Using legal remedies including injunctions and possession.
- Being audited through the Community Trigger mechanism.

### **6.2 Community Trigger**

A Community Trigger is a statutory requirement (ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014) designed to provide an opportunity for victims of ASB to have their case independently reviewed. The Council has agreed to transfer the responsibility for the management of the Community Trigger to Restorative Gloucestershire.

Victims can activate the Community Trigger and instigate the Councils complaints procedure simultaneously.

The Community Trigger process is outlined in detail within the Gloucestershire Restorative Justice web site at [www.restorativegloucestershire.co.uk](http://www.restorativegloucestershire.co.uk)

To instigate the Community Trigger, the tenant / complainant must:

- Have made three reports of ASB within 6 months.

## Agenda Item 7

- Have made five reports of ASB, involving the same location, culprit or problem from more than one individual or group of individuals within 6 months.
- Made an application of ASB within a reasonable time- allowing for time for action to have been taken.

The Community Trigger, is an audit of the ASB case to make sure SDC has followed their policies and put forward the reasonable resolutions to resolve the ASB. This is an independent review.

### **6.3 Working with Vulnerable Persons**

When vulnerable persons are identified, there will be a coordinated multi agency framework of support (if required) approach, which will be considered and applied.

Where the support cannot be applied by the Council, a multi-agency meeting will be organised to discuss the case with the relevant partnering agencies ensuring the outcome for has the right level of support to be offered.

Where support is rejected by either the victim or the perpetrator the ASB case will be reviewed to assess whether the case should be continued or an alternative action or solution is required.

It is important that the complainant or perpetrator provide the Council with honest and up to date information about their health and wellbeing to allow Tenant Services to offer the most appropriate support package.

### **6.4 Alternative Accommodation**

The Council acknowledges that complainants may request to be relocated from their existing accommodation; The Council will only consider these requests when provided with appropriate supporting evidence such as a Police report, evidenced threat to life or through an agreed multi agency meeting where the risk assessment, places the householder or their family in imminent danger. This approach is only taken in situations that are considered extreme and not the norm.

### **6.5 Request for No Action**

The Council recognises complainants can make a request for no action and this will only be successful where:

- The request has been made at the early stages of investigation and limited parties have been contacted.
- If the reported ASB is not harmful to the complainant or the community.
- Third party endorsement is not required from a professional body.
- The risk identified in managing the ASB is reasonably low.

### **7.0 ASB Investigation**



Every case of ASB received by the Council will be properly risk assessed and reasonable and proportionate action(s) taken. The level of action taken will depend on the degree of severity of the ASB and the risk this poses to the victim and to the wider community.

The victim of ASB will be given an Action Plan, detailing the actions to be taken to resolve the ASB with the appropriate review period.

There are three stages of action which will be considered, these are:

- Preventative,
- Informal,
- Formal legal action.

At each of these stages the perpetrator will always be given the option to cease the behaviour which is causing the ASB.

ASB investigations and the subsequent actions will be delivered within a framework of non-legal and legal actions. The cost of pursuing legal action; The Council will always make a request to the courts to award these against the perpetrator for payment.

If possession action is successful, the evicted parties are generally regarded as intentionally homeless. If these individuals approach the Council for assistance for re-housing advice, the appropriate support will be given but not generally to rehouse in our own stock.

The Council will consider the needs of both the victim and perpetrator at all stages of the ASB investigation.

### **7.1 Supporting Witnesses and Complainants**

The Council recognises the appropriate support given to witnesses and complainants is crucial to carrying out a high quality investigation with the right outcome, which is to stop the ASB and where applicable, to learn from the experience.

To be able to do this the Council will:

- Assist and support in completing witness statements.
- Manage the ASB in line with its service standard and policy.
- Ensure witnesses and complainants are involved in managing the ASB.
- Keep the witnesses and complainants updated on the progress of their case.
- Arrange suitable support where required.
- Suitable support is given before and at court with any reasonable out of pocket expenses being reimbursed.
- Offer where appropriate practical measures to ensure the safety of the witnesses and complainants either within their home or other solutions.

Witnesses will be expected to provide witness statement(s) and attend any court hearing(s) to ensure a robust case is presented.

# Agenda Item 7

## **7.2 Multi Landlord Estates:**

The Council will work in partnership with other landlords if the perpetrator is not a direct tenant of the Council. In these cases, it may not be the Council who will lead the investigation of ASB.

## **7.3 Partnership working**

The Council will work with a wide variety of partners for support, consultation and action on ASB issues. Partners will support the Council to decide the most appropriate course of action in protecting victims against ASB.

## **7.4 Closing Cases**

Our aim is to resolve all cases of ASB and we will close cases of ASB in the following circumstances:

- When we have successfully resolved the ASB in agreement with the complainant.
- the complaint has been investigated extensively and all options exhausted.
- There is no available evidence to support the allegations of ASB.
- When another agency is dealing with the case and no longer requires involvement by Stroud District Council.
- When the complainant fails to assist in providing evidence to our officers, and we cannot take further action.
- If we believe the ASB complaint to be vexatious.

All cases that have been closed will be confirmed in writing to the complainant outlining the reasons why the case is being closed.

## **7.5 Staff**

SDC will not accept abusive behaviour or language against staff, Councillors or its contractors whilst investigating ASB. The appropriate action will be taken if this occurs.

In the management of ASB, SDC's staff will be appropriately trained to identify and investigate ASB reported cases; staff will be able to cope with sensitive and difficult circumstances. Staff dealing with ASB will continue to receive regular specialist training to assist them with the skills and knowledge required to effectively tackle ASB including safeguarding for both adults and children.

## **8.0 National situation**

Where a national situation exists such as a pandemic, SDC will follow the guidance, legislation and the powers given to the Council or any other statutory body by central government. The actions taken will be appropriate to the situation such as:

- Communicating only by telephone.
- Sending out warning letters and text to tenants to cease the inappropriate behaviour.
- Corresponding by email.

- Carrying out risk assessments before a home visit can be scheduled.
- Making use of the appropriate technology such as mobile phones for video recordings.

### **9.0 Vexatious (unacceptable behaviour) Complaints**

The Council takes ASB in all its forms seriously, and will investigate all cases of alleged ASB. However, should our investigation highlight that a vexatious complaint has been made against another resident, we will refer to our corporate unacceptable behaviour complaints policy and may consider further action. By definition in the Council's unacceptable behaviour policy deems such actions as "unreasonable complainant behaviour" and "unreasonably persistent complaints".

### **10.0 Data Protection**

Tenant Services will share relevant information with third parties for the purposes of preventing, investigating and tackling anti-social behaviour. When sharing personal information, we will comply with all aspects of the GDPR and the DPA. Tenant Services Privacy Notice can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-the-council/access-to-information/privacy-and-cookie-policy/privacy-notice> and the full legislation General Data Protection Regulation 2016, Data Protection Act 2018, Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

### **10.1 Confidentiality**

Any information supplied to SDC to assist in the investigation of ASB will be taken in confidence and will only be shared to the appropriate relevant parties. SDC recognises that some victims will want to remain anonymous.

The complainant will always be advised on how the information or detail they have supplied will be used in resolving the ASB. There is a requirement for victims to co-operate with SDC to assist their investigation and any formal action taken supports a successful resolution

### **10.2 Publicity**

The Council will ensure the wider community is made aware of the successful resolution(s) on the work to prevent and tackle ASB through effective publicity but mindful that no personal data, names or addresses would be part of this activity

The council will make sure its tenants understand what ASB is and how incidents of this can be reported; further information on this is, available on the SDC's website. [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk).

SDC will decide where to publicise this information on a case by case basis, balancing the rights of the individual(s) and those of the community.

### **11.0 Monitoring Performance**

We are committed to monitoring and improving our performance in managing and resolving ASB. Monitoring will include:

## Agenda Item 7

- Regular performance reporting (quarterly to scrutiny members and annually to tenants)
- Benchmarking our service with other local authorities
- Reviewing customer experience using satisfaction surveys

### **11.1 Reviews**

This policy will be reviewed as the need arises through changes to legislation or regulation or no later than 3 years from its implementation date.

Where there has been a change in legislation which has an impact on the policy, the policy will be reviewed within 3 months of the legislation or regulation coming into effect.