

Homes and Neighbourhoods
222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 5 September 2024

Ward(s): All wards

Subject: Good Neighbourhood Policy report

1. Synopsis

1.1. Islington is a location where diversity thrives. We recognise the need for a nuanced approach to community well-being.

1.2. The core of this approach lies in the implementation of a Neighbourhood Policy, an innovative initiative that seeks to set clear standards of neighbourly behaviour, to promote positive behaviours, and build resilient communities in the borough. The policy would link in our Housing Strategy – [A Home For All](#), and our [Fairer Together](#) commitment.

1.3. This report delves into the concept of a Neighbourhood Policy, and the compelling reasons behind its potential adoption in Islington, and how it promises to benefit the borough by fostering a culture of tolerance, understanding, and harmonious coexistence among its residents and tenants. Creating guiding principles will play an important role in shaping a stronger, more cohesive Islington. Through the establishment of setting expectations and the encouragement of neighbourly tolerance, this policy aims to cultivate an environment where diverse lifestyles can thrive side by side, ultimately contributing to the enriched well-being of all Islington residents.

2. Recommendation

2.1. To approve the Good Neighbourhood Policy for implementation in the delivery of the council's housing services.

3. Background

3.1. Overview

3.2. Islington council is taking proactive steps to draft a comprehensive neighbourhood policy in response to a series of significant developments and recommendations. These key factors have

underscored the need for a more structured and community-focused approach to address neighbourly behaviour and non-antisocial issues within the borough.

3.3. Recommendations put forth by an ombudsman in a landlord determination letter, as well as an ombudsman spotlight noise complaint report from October 2022, drew attention to the need for clearer guidance and measures to manage disputes more effectively.

3.4. Additionally, after completing a spotlight on noise complaints self-assessment, this has contributed to the policy development process. By engaging in a self-assessment, the council has taken a critical look at its existing procedures and identified areas where improvements are needed to better serve the needs and expectations of Islington's residents.

3.5. Collectively, these factors have driven Islington council to proactively craft a neighbourhood policy that not only sets clear standards of neighbourly behaviour but also provides guidance on how to handle situations that do not fall under the umbrella of anti-social behaviour. This policy aims to enhance the quality of life for residents, foster a sense of community, and promote a more amicable living environment for all.

4. Purpose

4.1. This policy sets out Islington's method of managing our stock working in partnership with the help of our tenants and residents to keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe and secure, and where people want to live. The policy will highlight how Islington will work in partnership with our tenants and other stakeholders and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

4.2. Within the legal framework and context set out in Section Legal Framework and Context, this policy aims to ensure that tenants have enjoyment of their homes, which are in a safe, clean, and secure environment, and that they can take pride in. The core aim is to implement an innovative initiative that seeks to set clear standards of the expected neighbourly behaviour, to promote positive behaviours, set standards, provide guidance and build resilient communities in the borough.

4.3. Islington Council are committed to delivering fair, inclusive and accessible services to residents. We continue to work towards making our standard services suitable for a wide range of our residents. We recognise that fair access requires services that can be flexible to individual needs when our standard service offer does not meet the needs of a resident or their household, because of their particular circumstances, mental or physical health conditions or communications needs.

5. Aims

5.1. Overall, to meet the aims of this policy, the policy objectives are:

- We conduct regular neighbourhood inspections of communal areas and ensure that they are well maintained, tidy and free from graffiti.
- We provide guidance on how to deal with non-ASB classed behaviours.

- We will work in partnership with the Police and other services to help keep our estates free from anti-social behaviour (ASB), harassment and hate crime.
- We will conduct fire risk assessments in blocks of flats to identify and address fire risks.
- We will ensure communal areas are well maintained.
- Grounds maintenance work is carried out to the required standard.
- Residents are aware of their responsibilities, both in relation to their property and neighbourhood.
- We will consult with our tenants to identify improvements and work together to address local priorities.
- We will identify areas that need improvements and undertake measures to resolve them.
- We will promote tenant involvement opportunities, activities and events to help develop and support vibrant communities.

5.2. The policy has been created with residents, services across Islington Council, partnership services, Islington Tenant Management Organisations, registered housing providers in Islington and the voluntary and community sector. This includes workshops, benchmarking, forums, research, case studies and complaints, Community drop-in sessions, Let's Talk Islington online platform, and the Housing staff newsletter.

5.3. The review of this policy is set to the first six months and then yearly. This is because we want to make sure that the policy and implementation actions are suitable and are making a difference. During engagement of the policy colleagues and partners have suggested this timeframe as well.

6. Context

6.1. Islington Council manage approximately 25,000 tenanted properties and 10,000 leasehold properties, approximately there are 56,800 people living in the tenanted properties and approximately 12,700 leaseholders (who are named on the lease). There are approximately 15,700 people on the council's waiting list to be housed in Islington. Demonstrating high levels of unmet need for homes or alternative homes within the borough. The Neighbourhood Policy will include a set of guidelines, principles, and advice to help our tenants and residents to keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and secure and a place where people want to live. The document may include:

6.2. Introduction: An introductory section that provides context for the policy and explains its purpose and importance in fostering a sense of community and well-being.

6.3. Scope and Applicability: Information on who the policy applies to, such as residents, tenants, property owners, and community members. It should specify the geographical area or community covered by the policy.

- **Guidance, expectations, and advice on the following subjects:**
- **Guidance around situations that do not fit into the ASB category.**
- **Permissions**
- **Reporting**
- **Access Hubs**
- **Keys**
- **Neighbourhood walkabouts**
- **Communal Inspections**
- **Vandalism and Graffiti**
- **Litter and Fly Tipping**
- **ASB and Neighbourhood Disputes**
- **Vehicles and Parking**
- **Tree Management**
- **CCTV and Camera Doorbells**
- **Infestation of Pests and Vermin**
- **Cleaning**
- **Gardens and Fences**
- **Fires and BBQs**
- **Grassed Areas and Communal Land**
- **Complaints and Feedback**
- **Equality Impact Assessment**
- **Garages, Sheds, cycle storage, estate parking**

6.4. Behavioural Expectations: Detailed descriptions of expected behaviours, attitudes, and actions that contribute to being a good neighbour and maintaining a positive living environment. This section may cover topics like noise levels, cleanliness, and respect for property boundaries.

6.5. Conflict Resolution: Guidance on how to address and resolve conflicts or disputes between neighbours, including the procedures for reporting concerns or complaints and the role of community mediators or relevant authorities.

6.6. Community Resources: Information about available community resources, services, and support mechanisms that can assist residents in adhering to the policy or addressing issues related to neighbourly behaviour.

6.7. Penalties and Consequences: If applicable, an outline of the consequences for failing to adhere to the policy, which may include warnings, fines, or other measures.

6.8. Review and Amendments: A statement indicating how the policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing community needs or circumstances.

7. Research, benchmarking, and engagement

7.1. We have researched policy papers available online, the various related Acts, Government guidance, the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, the Housing Ombudsman spotlight reports and have taken into consideration their Special Investigation into our services when developing this policy.

7.2. Complaints and case studies where residents vulnerabilities or support needs feature have been reviewed and considered as part of the design of this policy.

7.3. The following statistics provide insights into the opinions and experiences of Islington tenants regarding neighbourhood and community-related matters, including tenancy status, neighbour relationships, noise concerns, and accountability for pet owners. This also highlights the requirement for such a policy to be in place and set a standard for Islington council tenants to adhere to.

7.4. The variety of responses when asked “what are the key issues that affect your enjoyment of your neighbourhood?”, the responses were as listed below:

What are the key issues that affect your enjoyment of your neighbourhood?
Noise
Just dogs barking for hours some days other than that it's a lovely street
Traffic, night-time noise disturbances
The number of alcoholics and drug use we have!
Lack of Space
Drug taking on estate and sitting on stairwell
Dog mess not picked up by owners
Nothing
Adequate space
Drug dealing. Lack of green space. No storage in flats. No lift. Litter and dog poo in streets
Drug dealing and late-night noise
Teenage safety
Dog poo in streets. Drug dealing in and around estates.
No
Dog poo in streets on pavements. Drug dealing. Pollution
Someone leaving raw/cooked meat out in the gardens for the animals
Accessibility and security - particularly of communal areas. Love parks and green areas which are kept reasonably clean depending on usage. Love that we have community centres/libraries/ churches with activities free or at low cost - good for getting out and meeting people.

7.5. The requirement to implement a comprehensive neighbourhood policy is in response to a series of significant developments and recommendations. These key factors have underscored the need for a more structured and community-focused approach to address neighbourly behaviour and non-antisocial issues within the borough.

7.6. Firstly, a motion for this policy stems from recommendations put forth by an ombudsman landlord determination letter. This letter addressed specific grievances and disputes involving residents, and has prompted us as a council to assess and enhance its framework for promoting harmonious neighbourly relations. The orders of the letter included:

“Devise and publish a good neighbourhood management policy, in order that it can have an enhanced mechanism to effectively manage reports of noise nuisance that do not reach the threshold for its ASB process. The landlord should write to this Service setting out how its neighbourhood management policy meets the requirements set out in the Ombudsman’s Spotlight report on noise complaints. The landlord should also confirm publication of the policy and set out how it will bring the policy into its business-as-usual operations. Identified changes and enhancement measures must be implemented within three months of the date of this report.”

7.7. Furthermore, an ombudsman spotlight noise complaint report from October 2022 has drawn attention to the need for clearer guidance and measures to manage such disputes effectively. The report mentions:

“Our report makes several recommendations to strengthen ASB policy and neighbourhood management strategy. A good policy helps form the foundation of a good service, and policy weaknesses can be identified by reviewing complaints. To handle noise reports that do not meet the statutory threshold, landlords should adopt a proactive good neighbourhood management strategy, distinct to the ASB policy, with clear options for maintaining good neighbourhood relationships. This should include mediation, an approach that should work better but lacks confidence amongst residents because it can be deployed too late and under an ASB label.”

7.8. Additionally, the Ombudsman report stated:

“Landlords should have a proactive good neighbourhood management policy, distinct to the ASB policy, with a clear suite of options for maintaining good neighbourhood relationships and a matrix for assessing which option is the most appropriate. These options should include mediation, information sharing and community building events and, where appropriate, dedicated staffing. This will ensure that low level issues of neighbour friction are dealt with at the appropriate levels and not inappropriately handled as potential ASB.

Landlords should engage residents in the development of the good neighbourhood management policy, including residents who have recently raised a formal complaint with the landlord, to assure themselves that it reflects the expectations of residents and will be effective.”

Starting the tenancy		Rationale for recommendation from spotlight report	Self-Assessment Outcome
21	Landlords should provide information leaflets on 'how to be a good neighbour' as standard with the new tenancy induction pack, especially on estates where there have been ASB issues previously or where sensitive lettings policies are in place.	"Another good practice that we were given examples of by a number of landlords was some simple information leaflets to new residents that explained the common trigger points for neighbour disagreements, including noise nuisance. Landlords reported that these leaflets were often successful in helping people understand the impact of their potential actions on their neighbours and the simple steps they could take to mitigate for that, such as letting neighbours know that there was going to be a party and what time it would be finishing."	This is a really good document but not sure where this is provided and cannot find it on any relevant webpage on Islington Council Website. Plus, link to ASB webpage is broken. 20190618tenancyguidefeb19pdf.pdf

8. Implications

8.1. Financial Implications

8.2. This policy sets out a commitment towards ensuring that Housing services are delivered in a fair, inclusive, and accessible way, shaping a more resilient and cohesive Islington.

8.3. There are no direct financial implications arising from this policy and spend on implementing the policy will be managed within existing budgets. However, cost is a key consideration when adapting processes and developing services which are flexible to individual needs, and this will continue to be the case.

8.4. It should be acknowledged that in launching this policy, the associated publicity may result in increased approaches and complaints to key neighbourhood services, requiring increased demand on service delivery, for example within ASB. Communication will need to be managed carefully to ensure that expectations are managed. We do not anticipate significant financial budgets pressures in these areas.

9. Legal Framework and Context

9.1. Under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, The Regulator of Social Housing requires all registered providers to publish a policy setting out, how in consultation with their tenants, they will maintain and improve the neighbourhood associated with their homes.

9.2. These new standards are there to ensure people feel safe and secure in their homes, can get problems fixed before they spiral out of control, and see exactly how good their landlord is performing, giving tenants a stronger voice. Of the seven chapters within the White Paper, several are particularly relevant to the aims of this policy:

- To be safe in your home
- To know how your landlord is performing.
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

9.3. As part of the new consumer regulation regime, from April 2023, the Social Housing Regulator has introduced a series of 22 mandatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) creating a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. These measures include those applicable directly to building safety as well as those based on tenant perception surveys setting out tenant's views on our performance which will include responsible neighbourhood management. The TSM measures under responsible neighbourhood management include:

- TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
- TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
- TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

9.4. The tenancy agreement between the council and tenants and the lease with leaseholders set out responsibilities and expectations of all parties. Tenancy agreements can be updated, following consultation, to reflect changes in the law or expectations of the parties. When these are changed tenants are informed to ensure they are aware of any changes to their responsibilities. Information about tenancy conditions and responsibilities can be found at [Tenancy conditions | Islington Council](#). New tenants are provided with the New Tenant Pack when they sign up for their tenancy and their tenancy advisor will go through this with them. If residents have particular communications needs to ensure they understand their responsibilities, these will be catered for during the sign-up process, to ensure they have a full understanding of their responsibilities.

9.5. Under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, The Regulator of Social Housing requires all registered providers to have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and to tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.

9.6. The proposed policy must include provisions demonstrating compliance with the mandatory tenant satisfaction measures applicable to good neighbourliness that came into effect on 1st April 2023.

9.7. If the policy requires variations of tenancy agreements, the council must follow the procedure set out in s103 of the Housing Act 1985 . Every tenant must be sent a document containing the variation.

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

10.1. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

10.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on 19 April 2024. The main findings are that the policy will provide benefit for residents with protected characteristics and those with other vulnerabilities as it seeks to deliver an equitable service for all residents, flexing wherever possible to the needs of residents and their households, providing an empathetic and adjusted service, where it is feasible to do so within the resources available to those services. The full Equalities Impact Assessment is appended.

11. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

11.1 This policy will have no environmental implications.

12. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

11.1. The Good Neighbourhood Policy has been developed to capture the council's commitment to support residents, many of whom experience issues of non-anti-social behaviour, setting expectations of resident behaviour and how to be a good neighbour

and the expectations of Islington Council. This aligns with the council's ambition for a more equal future.

11.2 The service commitment sets out how we will deliver services to ensure fair, inclusive and accessible and our plans for achieving this, meeting the expectation on us as a social landlord from the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman.

Final report clearance:

Authorised by: Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

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