

E-scooter and E-bike Policy



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Owner	<i>Jim Brennan</i>		
Approved by	<i>TBC</i>		
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Review date			
Purpose	<i>To promote the safe use and storage of e-scooters and e-bikes and provide a clear statement on the management of their storage and use within council properties and shared communal spaces.</i>		

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 E-scooters and E-Bikes have become increasingly popular, offering residents a practical, sustainable way to travel. However, most use lithium-ion batteries, which can pose a fire risk if they are damaged, modified, or charged incorrectly. Fires involving these batteries can start quickly and spread rapidly, producing heat and smoke that can make it difficult to escape safely.
- 1.2 This policy explains how Sandwell Council manages the risks associated with e-scooters and e-bikes in council properties. It sets out the rules for how they should be stored and charged, when permission may be required, and the action the Council may take if fire safety is put at risk.
- 1.3 Sandwell Council has a duty to reduce fire risks in its properties and protect the safety of residents, staff, and visitors. This policy aims to:
 - Promote the safe use, storage, and charging of e-scooters and e-bikes.
 - Explain how the Council manages the storage of these devices in council buildings.
 - Ensure the safety of tenants, staff, and visitors.
 - Make residents aware of their responsibility to store and use these devices safely.
 - Clarify that owners may be liable for any damage or injury caused by unsafe storage or use, and may be charged for repairs where damage occurs.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to council tenants, leaseholders (including subletting households) and shared owners, including household members and their visitors. This policy applies to tenants and leaseholders living in all property types, including high rise and low rise blocks, houses, maisonettes and bungalows.

3. What do we mean by E-scooters and E-bikes?

3.1 The policy will use the following definitions:

3.2 E-Scooter

- An e-scooter is a small electric vehicle powered by a rechargeable battery. It usually has two wheels, a standing platform, and handlebars for steering. The motor helps move the scooter without the rider needing to pedal.
- In the UK, privately owned e-scooters cannot be used on public roads, pavements, or cycle lanes. They can only be used on private land with the landowner's permission. Using a private e-scooter in public places may lead to fines or the scooter being confiscated.

3.3 E-Bikes

- An e-bike (electric bike), also known as an Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC), is a bicycle with an electric motor that helps the rider when pedalling.
- To be classed as a legal e-bike in the UK:
 - The bike must have working pedals.
 - The electric motor must have a maximum power output of 250 watts.
 - The motor must stop assisting once the bike reaches 15.5 mph.
- E-bikes that meet these rules do not require a licence, tax, or insurance and can be used in the same way as a normal bicycle. If they do not meet these rules, they may be treated as a motor vehicle and different laws may apply.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Key Points for Residents

- Do not store or charge e-scooters or e-bikes in communal areas.
- Only UK-certified, unmodified devices are allowed inside homes, with written Council permission.
- Always follow manufacturer instructions and use the official charger.

- Charging must not be left unattended or overnight and should be kept away from flammable materials and escape routes.
- Modified, DIY, or uncertified devices are prohibited.
- Breaches of this policy may result in warnings, removal of the device, or further enforcement action.
- Following these rules helps protect you, your neighbours, and the building.

Further information can be found in the full E-scooter and E-bike Policy.

4.2 Understanding the Risks

- Modified, DIY, or uncertified e-bikes and e-scooters are more likely to overheat, short-circuit, or malfunction. These risks are especially serious in communal areas like corridors, stairwells, or landings, where they could block escape routes in a fire.
- Under tenancy condition 7.8, residents must not keep flammable or dangerous materials in their home or any associated storage space. Lithium-ion batteries, particularly if modified or unbranded, may be considered dangerous.
- Leaseholders are also bound by similar rules under their lease, especially where the safety of the building or its insurance could be affected.
- Only UK-approved, certified devices and batteries should be used.

4.3 Storing Inside Your Home

- Safe e-bikes and e-scooters may be kept inside your property if written permission is obtained from the Council. Residents must ensure there is adequate space to store the device safely and that charging is done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the official charger.
- Modified, DIY, or uncertified devices cannot be approved under any circumstances. The Council may also refuse permission where storage or charging inside a property would present an unacceptable fire hazard or require significant alterations to the property.

4.4 Charging E-Bikes and E-Scooters

Charging in communal areas is strictly prohibited. To stay safe, tenants must:

- Only use manufacturer-approved chargers.
- Charge batteries while awake and never leave them charging overnight.
- Keep batteries away from flammable materials.
- Avoid charging near doors, corridors, or escape routes.

4.5 Battery Safety

To reduce the risk of fire, tenants should:

- Check batteries regularly for damage, swelling, or overheating.
- Never use damaged or non-original batteries.
- Report any concerns immediately to Sandwell Council.

4.6 Requesting Permission

- Residents seeking permission to keep an e-scooter or e-scooter inside their home should first gather the following information: their address, details of the device and charger, and a description of where it will be stored and charged safely.
- Requests can be submitted by phone, email, or using the online form. Once received, the Housing Management Team reviews the request, supported by advice from the Building Safety and Fire Safety Team, who assess potential risks. Factors considered include the type and certification of the device, space and storage arrangements within the property, and the potential impact on fire safety and other residents.
- The Council aims to respond within 28 days of receiving all required information. Permission may be granted with conditions or refused if the risks cannot be mitigated.

4.7 Shared Spaces and Communal Areas

- E-bikes and e-scooters must not be stored in communal areas such as corridors, stairways, or landings. These areas must always be kept clear for fire safety.
- If an e-scooter or e-bike is found in a communal area, the Council may remove it and recover the costs from the owner using the tort approach.

- Council staff carry out regular checks of communal areas to ensure escape routes remain clear.
- Items left in hallways or on stairs can block escape routes and make it harder for firefighters to respond. For this reason, the Council has a zero-tolerance approach to storing items in communal walkways.

4.8 Inspections and Enforcement

- Sandwell Council carries out regular inspections to make sure all properties, including communal areas and individual homes, remain safe. Staff check that hallways, stairwells, and landings are clear, and that fire safety measures such as fire doors, emergency lighting, and signage are working properly.
- Sandwell Council regularly inspects all properties, including communal areas and homes, to ensure fire safety. Staff check that hallways, stairwells, and landings are clear, and that fire doors, emergency lighting, and signage are working properly.
- If an e-scooter or e-bike is unsafe, modified, or poses a fire risk, whether in a communal area or in a home, the Council may remove it. Serious hazards may lead to Prohibition Notices, or in high-rise buildings, Contravention Notices. Ignoring these notices is a criminal offence and can result in fines, court action, or injunctions.

Tenants who breach this policy may face the following actions:

- **First breach** – Written warning with guidance on safe storage and charging.
- **Second breach** – Formal notice under the tenancy agreement; device may be removed at the tenant's cost.
- **Persistent or serious breaches** – Further tenancy enforcement action or referral to fire safety authorities.

Following these rules helps keep you, your neighbours, and the building safe.

5. Development of Policy

- 5.1 Sandwell Council is committed to clear and open communication about how this policy is applied. We want our approach to be fair, transparent, and informed by residents' experiences.
- 5.2 Tenants and leaseholders will have the opportunity to review and comment on the policy before it is finalised. Feedback can be given online or in person, so residents can choose the method that works best for them.
- 5.3 By involving residents, we aim to ensure the policy reflects the needs, priorities, and experiences of the people and communities it affects, while keeping everyone safe.

6. Related Documents

- 6.1 The following documents should be considered in conjunction with this policy:
 - [Tenancy Conditions](#)
 - [Tenant Handbook](#)
 - [Mobility Scooter Policy](#)
 - [Property Compliance Policy](#)
 - [Stay Put – Fire Safety Advice Leaflet](#)
 - [Fire Risk Assessments](#)
 - [Resident Engagement Strategies](#)

7. Legal Framework

- 7.1 This policy takes into account the following legislation and guidance.
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by Fire Safety Act 2021)
 - The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - The Building Safety Act 2022
 - Highway Act 1835
 - Road Traffic Act 1988
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Local Government Association guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats 2011

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 Sandwell Council is committed to making sure all residents are treated fairly and equally when applying this policy. We consider the individual needs of tenants, their families, or anyone living with them, and will make reasonable adjustments where needed to support safety and compliance.

8.2 All Council staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, so they understand how to adapt policies, procedures, and communication to meet residents' needs. This helps ensure the Council meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

8.3 We use the ST*R model to guide our approach:

- **Strengths-Based:** We recognise each resident's skills and resilience, empowering them to make safe choices about e-bikes and e-scooters.
- **Trauma-Informed:** We provide support in a sensitive and safe way, understanding that residents may face challenges that affect their use or storage of devices.
- **Relationship-Based:** Staff build trusting, respectful relationships, ensuring residents feel valued and supported.

8.4 Reasonable Adjustments

Sandwell Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments for residents who may face barriers in understanding or complying with the policy. There is no fixed list of adjustments; each case is considered individually to ensure solutions are fair, practical, and proportionate.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Providing policy information, safety guidance, or correspondence in alternative formats (e.g. large print, easy-read, or accessible digital versions);

- Offering additional support or advocacy to help residents understand requirements around storage, charging, and safe use;
- Allowing flexible arrangements or additional time to relocate or safely store e-bikes or e-scooters where needed.

For more information, please refer to Sandwell’s [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).

8.5 ST*R Model

Sandwell Council applies the ST*R model to ensure that our approach to managing e-bikes and e-scooters is supportive, fair, and respectful. This model is built on three principles:

- **Strengths-Based Approach** - Staff are encouraged to recognise residents’ willingness to comply with safety requirements and to work collaboratively to achieve safe outcomes.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach** - We acknowledge that enforcement action or changes to how residents store or use e-bikes and e-scooters may cause concern or disruption. Officers are expected to act with sensitivity and understanding.
- **Relationship-Based Approach** - Positive, respectful interactions with residents underpin the policy. Clear communication and practical guidance will be provided to help residents meet safety expectations.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This Policy will be reviewed periodically or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, management, a major incident or if it is no longer suitable.

10. Policy Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By

0.1	July 2025	First draft of policy, feedback indicated additional conversations with legal, tenants and residents needed to be had on our management approach.	Owen Roberts	
0.2	March 2026	Second draft of policy	Louis Bebb	