GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Approved by	Nigel Collumbell		
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Purpose	*To outline what constitutes being a good neighbour, and to outline Sandwell Council's commitment to ensure effective neighbourhood management to support tenants and residents across Sandwell.*		

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1. Purpose

1.1 To outline what constitutes being a good neighbour, and to outline Sandwell Council's commitment to ensure good neighbourhood management to support tenants and residents across the Sandwell Borough.

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2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to the tenants, leaseholders and residents of Sandwell Council.

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3. What is Good Neighbourhood Management to Sandwell Council?

3.1 Good Neighbourhood Management is about creating and maintaining safe, clean, and welcoming environments for all residents. Sandwell Council is committed to ensuring that tenants, leaseholders, and residents have access to well-maintained communal areas and services that meet their needs.

3.2 The Council's approach focuses on promoting a sense of security and belonging, where residents feel valued and part of a strong, connected community. This involves clear communication, actively listening to feedback, and working together to address issues that affect the neighbourhood.

3.3 By maintaining high standards in the management of properties and communal spaces, Sandwell Council aims to improve the quality of life for everyone and ensure a positive living experience for all residents.

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4. Policy Statement

4.1 Neighbourhood Responsibility and Good Neighbourhood Practices

4.1.1 The six towns of Sandwell are vibrant and welcoming communities where residents are proud to live, work, and visit. To maintain this positive environment, it is essential that Sandwell Council, along with tenants and residents, work together in partnership. This shared responsibility means being mindful of how actions affect others and promoting mutual respect within communities. Tenants and residents should treat their neighbours with understanding, offer support during times of need, remain particularly attentive to the elderly and vulnerable, and take pride in both their own homes and the shared indoor or outdoor communal areas, being considerate of others when using these spaces.

4.1.2 While everyone strives for good relationships with neighbours, disagreements or misunderstandings can occur. If issues arise, it is recommended to start with a friendly conversation. In many cases, the neighbour may not be aware that their actions have caused concern, and a simple discussion can often resolve the matter.

4.1.3 Being a good neighbour contributes to a happier, stronger, and more supportive community across Sandwell, fostering a positive environment for all.

4.1.4 Sandwell Council encourages tenants and residents to show respect and look out for each other, particularly the vulnerable in communities. It is believed that good neighbourly behaviour leads to a more confident, welcoming, and cohesive community in the Sandwell Borough.

4.1.5 Actions tenants and residents can take to be a good neighbour:

- Avoid using offensive, derogatory, or intimidating language.
- Support and care for the elderly, vulnerable, and isolated individuals within the community.
- Refrain from imposing personal beliefs or decisions on others.
- Ensure that children and visitors are considerate of neighbours, particularly when playing or visiting.
- Respect the rights of children and young people to play in a safe, enjoyable space.
- Park vehicles thoughtfully and in designated spaces.

- Clean up after pets and ensure they are always supervised, especially dogs.
- Be considerate when using communal areas, ensuring actions do not disturb others.
- Keep noise from electronic devices to a minimum, particularly during the night or when windows and doors are open.
- Notify neighbours in advance if planning DIY work or hosting a party that may generate excess noise.
- Ask visitors to be mindful of noise levels, especially when leaving late at night.

4.1.6 In some situations, a 'Good Neighbour Agreement' may be used where it could benefit a particular area, such as a problematic block or a neighbourhood with ongoing disputes. This agreement, made between Sandwell Council and its tenants, complements the terms of the tenancy agreement. It outlines mutual commitments to maintain peaceful living conditions. It is important to note that not all behaviour can be regulated, and what may annoy one person might not be an issue for another.

4.1.7 Some neighbourly issues, while disruptive, may not qualify as anti-social behaviour. The Good Neighbour Agreement is not a legally binding document but is intended to help set expectations for living harmoniously. Breaches of the agreement will only be addressed under the terms of the tenancy agreement or relevant legislation when it is proportionate and reasonable.

4.2 Sandwell Council's Commitment to Good Neighbourhood Management:

4.2.1 Sandwell Council is committed to maintaining positive neighbourhoods, supporting good management across tenancies, and ensuring that residents in Sandwell feel safe and valued.

4.2.2 An Estates and Caretaking Service is offered in high and low-rise flats to ensure both internal and external communal areas are maintained to a high standard. Reports of littering, fly-tipping, or other nuisances are dealt with swiftly to ensure the cleanliness and safety of blocks.

4.2.3 A Concierge Service is available in many high-rise buildings to enhance security for residents and to support the collection of evidence in cases of anti-social behaviour.

4.2.4 Residents are informed of how to report noise nuisance through accessible and clear channels, including the Noise App and noise monitoring equipment in extreme cases. Information on how to report noise is widely available across Sandwell Council platforms. It is also made clear whether a noise complaint falls under the Good Neighbourhood Management policy or if it is considered anti-social behaviour.

4.2.5 Sandwell Council regularly reviews staff training and support to maintain high levels of customer care, with a particular focus on helping staff manage challenging situations and setting clear expectations.

4.2.6 A variety of options are provided to resolve neighbourly issues, including information-sharing and community-building events, and dedicated staffing when necessary. This ensures that low-level disputes are handled appropriately and not unnecessarily escalated as anti-social behaviour.

4.2.7 Sandwell Council works closely with other agencies, including the Police and Environmental Health, to handle reports of noise and anti-social behaviour. Service level agreements are in place to ensure the effectiveness of these partnerships, with clear roles and responsibilities.

4.2.8 Information leaflets on 'how to be a good neighbour' are provided as part of the new tenancy induction pack to encourage positive community engagement from the start.

5. Related Documents

5.1 The following documents that should read in conjunction with this policy:

- Good Neighbour Agreement

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Equality Impact Assessment (Draft)
- Tenant Handbook
- Tenancy Conditions
- Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy (Draft)

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6. Legal Framework

6.1 By implementing this Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, Sandwell Council aims to uphold compliance with all applicable legislation and regulatory requirements and fulfil its obligations detailed below:

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Equality Act 2010
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

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7. Policy Development

7.1 Input is required from the Housing and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Teams with regards to the development of this Policy.

7.2 Sandwell Council recognises the importance of clear and effective communication in ensuring good neighbourhood management. To achieve this, the Council will consult with residents on a draft version of this policy, providing opportunities to submit feedback both online and in person.

7.3 Incorporating resident input into the development of this policy enables the Council to enhance its approach to neighbourhood management, ensuring that the services provided meet the needs of tenants, leaseholders and residents.

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8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 Sandwell Council will ensure equal and fair access to our services; we will do this by taking into consideration the individual needs of our tenants, their family or other persons living with them. We will ensure that individual needs are considered throughout the Neighbourhood Management process and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

8.2 The Council will treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.

8.3 All staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to embed understanding about where we may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, and ways of working to accommodate resident's individual needs. This is mandatory training which is monitored by our Learning and Development Team. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework also meets our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

8.4 The draft Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy has identified no negative impacts, with positive impacts identified for some protected characteristics as this Policy will promote understanding and good relations within neighbourhoods.

8.5 **Reasonable Adjustments**

Sandwell Council will support the needs of our diverse residents by making reasonable adjustments to our Neighbourhood Management processes, which could be a physical change or change in work practices to avoid any disadvantage to a resident in accessing this policy. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- We will provide information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print).

- We will risk assess and re-prioritise duties by considering the vulnerabilities or individual needs of the household where identified.
- We will use plain language.
- This policy is published on our website, and residents can do the following:
    - Change colours, contrast levels and font size.
    - Zoom in up to 300% without text spilling off the screen.
    - Access the policy from a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or PC.

Customers can also request that we make any other reasonable adjustments in the following ways:

- in person
- in writing for example by email, by post, text
- by telephone
- by a family member when we have been given permission to do so; and or
- a member of staff may suggest for one to be made, when they are aware it will support the customer needs.

For more information, please refer to Sandwell's Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

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9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 All information used in the writing of this Policy is up to date and in accordance with current legislation.

9.2 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.

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10. Policy Document Version Control

10.1 This Policy will be reviewed periodically.

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
0.1	07.06.24	Good Neighbourhood Management Policy	Rachel Price	
0.2	06.11.24	Good Neighbourhood Management Policy	Rachel Price	
0.3	17.02.25	Good Neighbourhood Management Policy	Rachel Price	