

Mid Devon District Council

Housing Services

**Neighbourhood Management
Policy**

August 2014 V2

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PART 1: Statement of Policies

POLICY STATEMENT

Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) understands the importance of ensuring that tenants have quiet enjoyment of their homes, which are in a safe, clean and secure environment that they can take pride in. This policy identifies how we manage our neighbourhoods and how it contributes towards a proactive housing management service. This should be read in line with our other policies including recharges, garage management, car parking management, improvements to Council properties and tenant involvement.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS POLICY

In implementing this policy, the Council's overall objectives are to:

- Work with tenants and other residents, to keep our estates as clean and tidy as possible
- Identify any areas that are in need of attention or improvement
- Enable tenants to get involved with neighbourhood management by suggesting improvements and initiatives to prevent anti-social behaviour
- Ensure that tenants and private occupiers are made aware of, and accept, their responsibilities in relation to estate management.
- Tenants must seek permission if they wish to install hanging structures such as hanging baskets or bird feeders but these must be positioned in such a way as to avoid damage to the structure of the building. If they are to be installed in blocks of flats, other residents living on lower levels should be consulted, where possible, and there should be evidence of this before permission will be given. Tenants will need to be mindful of the conditions of their tenancy when seeking permission and if, at any time, the Neighbourhood Officer identifies a breach of tenancy relating to the cultivation of plants in hanging baskets, then permission will be withdrawn.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AREAS

The Housing Service has Neighbourhood Teams which are responsible for specific areas within Mid Devon's boundaries. Each officer within each team has their own patch based on a specific geographical area and that officer is responsible for estate management in that area. Information regarding neighbourhood areas is available on our website. Where tenants do not have internet access, they are able to contact the Neighbourhood teams for more information by telephoning 01884 255255.

Any queries regarding the neighbourhood management of our estates should be directed to the Neighbourhood team for that particular geographical area.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKABOUTS

Tenants, Councillors (both district and parish) and other agencies such as the Police are welcome to join Neighbourhood Officers when an estate in their area is inspected to raise any concerns and share ideas for improvement. A schedule of neighbourhood walkabouts is available on our website.

Neighbourhood walkabouts enable Neighbourhood Officers to identify issues surrounding the following:

- Breaches of tenancy
- Grounds maintenance issues, including hedges, trees, boundaries, grassed / planted areas
- Repairs
- Any health & safety issues. For example, any deterioration to pathways which could be trip hazards
- Communal areas – internal and external
- Car parks and garages
- Security issues, including fencing / boundaries, security doors
- Tenancy issues, including property condition, property improvements, untidy gardens, pets
- Anti-social behaviour, including graffiti / vandalism, drugs, abandoned cars, fly-tipping

Where concerns are identified, the tenant(s) to which the issue relates will be contacted and if applicable, will be advised to remedy the issue. If necessary, other agencies will also be contacted.

In addition to ad-hoc visits undertaken by Neighbourhood Officers, neighbourhood walkabouts are undertaken at a minimum of every six months.

COMMUNAL INSPECTIONS

In addition to neighbourhood walkabouts, inspections of communal areas are undertaken on a monthly basis by Neighbourhood Officers where any issues are identified and acted upon. Where notice boards are in place, tenants/leaseholders are able to leave comments for Neighbourhood Officers.

As outlined in the Fire Risk (with a particular focus on communal areas) Policy, Housing Caretakers also inspect communal areas.

Checklists are completed in order to identify if there are any areas of concern for both internal and external communal areas in order for these to be followed up. This includes communal areas being free from items which are not permitted to be there and identifying slip, trip and fire hazards.

ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET

The Housing Service has an allocated annual environmental improvement fund to help improve the security and general appearance of our estates and communities.

Tenants are encouraged to offer suggestions to the Housing Service for ideas of work / projects to be carried out and for which this fund can be used.

REVIEW

Unless there is significant change beforehand, the next review of this policy is due August 2018 and every four years thereafter.