

Broxtowe Borough Council

Housing Neighbourhood Strategy 2019-2022

Our Vision

The Council's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020 sets out our vision of:

‘Broxtowe.... A great place where people enjoy living,
working and spending leisure time’

One of the key priorities for Housing set out in the Council's Corporate Plan is to:

‘Become an excellent housing provider’

To create cohesive and thriving neighbourhoods where people want to live and feel safe and work to close the gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods. The Council is committed to working with local communities and partner agencies to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods need to meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents. Our neighbourhoods should be inclusive places where residents feel empowered to shape and contribute to life in their neighbourhood.

Why have a Neighbourhood Strategy?

Where we live and the quality of our immediate environment has a huge impact on our quality of life and wellbeing. This includes the physical environment such as the cleanliness of our streets and quality of green space; but also how we feel about our neighbourhood – whether we feel safe, have a sense of community and get on with our neighbours.

The Neighbourhood Strategy will assist the Borough in achieving a number of these themes within its housing stock and communities.

It is also recognised that if there are issues within neighbourhoods that are not being effectively tackled, whether this be related to the quality of accommodation, maintenance of property or related to other issues within the neighbourhood, such as crime and anti-social behaviour or be related to this can have an impact on tenancy sustainment.

It is recognised that in many of our communities and in areas where the concentration of our general needs housing is higher, there is current low engagement from the Council with the community and the needs of those communities are not understood. The Neighbourhood Strategy in conjunction with the Council's Engagement Strategy 19-22 aims to tackle some of these issues to help empower residents and resolve complaints and issues within Neighbourhoods.

How the Neighbourhood Strategy has been developed?

The Neighbourhood Strategy has been developed in response to the Housing Green Paper and also some of the issues that the Grenfell Tower Fire brought to the fore.

The Housing Green Paper identified 5 key themes

- A safe and decent home which is fundamental to a sense of security and our ability to get on in life;
- Improving and speeding up how complaints are resolved;
- Empowering residents and ensuring their voices are heard so that landlords are held to account;
- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities, challenging the stereotypes that exist about residents and their communities, and;
- Building the social homes that we need and ensuring that those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership

The Neighbourhood Strategy has also been developed in response to STAR survey, sent to all residents, that shows a particularly disparity in satisfaction levels between those tenants living in Independent Living and those living in General Needs blocks.

| Question | Satisfaction % Independent Living | Satisfaction % General Needs |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live? | 88 | 76 |

| Question | Satisfaction % Independent Living | Satisfaction % General Needs |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| How satisfied are you with the appearance and surroundings of your neighbourhood? | 82 | 72 |

It was also clear from the STAR survey that the cleanliness, appearance and security of blocks in General Housing was of far greater concern for the residents living there than it is in Independent Living. It is therefore clear that in our General Needs neighbourhoods, there are problems and concerns that need to be addressed.

How the Neighbourhood Strategy will be delivered – The Introduction of Priority Neighbourhoods?

The Neighbourhood Strategy will aim to concentrate and deliver more bespoke services at a neighbourhood level, understanding that the needs and priorities of each neighbourhood is different.

Within the Neighbourhood Strategy, 'Priority Neighbourhoods' will be defined for the Council to tackle specific issues at that local level. This priority status will be reviewed depending on results and the successful addressing of the key issues. Before a Priority Neighbourhood is identified, the Council will first use the variety of information available to it in terms of empirical data as well as responses from customers to surveys and other engagement methods to create an 'Area Profile' for each area. Once Area Profiles have been produced, Priority Neighbourhoods will be identified from the results.

An aim of developing Priority Neighbourhoods is to ensure that staff are visible, listening to and responding to the needs and concerns within the community. It is expected that the needs and priorities for communities could be diverse, they could be about the safety or condition of their living environment, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, the cost of living and the impact of welfare reform or more specific issues at a local level. Therefore within these Priority Neighbourhoods, resources from different teams within housing will be concentrated on tackling the issues that have been identified. Additional financial resources will also be made available for any capital investment where necessary that will bring a tangible benefit to the community within the neighbourhood.

It is hoped that the creation of a partnership approach across the teams within housing, the wider Council, established partners such as the Police, local residents and Ward Councillors will lead to an enhancement in housing areas within Broxtowe.

Neighbourhood Strategy Priorities

The Neighbourhood Strategy covers a three year period and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the strategy continues to meet national and local priorities.

The strategy will be supported by an action plan

| To Improve Neighbourhoods, but Understand that Each Neighbourhood is Different | |
|--|---|
| Strategy Action | To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy |
| Create and agree a minimum standard of what is expected to be achieved in each neighbourhood, regardless of whether it has a priority status or not. | Agree minimum standard as a Council through the Housing Performance Group, based around health, safety and environmental factors. |
| Identify a series of Priority Neighbourhoods | Identify first Priority Neighbourhood within the Strategy and begin to deliver services accordingly |
| Strategy Action | To be implemented throughout the Strategy |
| Ensure that residents are aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect of the Council within their neighbourhood | Use noticeboards in neighbourhoods and other media to publicise positive behaviours and minimum standards |

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| | agreed by residents and members across neighbourhoods |
| Programme of training for officers working in neighbourhoods to ensure that agreed standards are understood | All staff to be training in accordance with agreed standards |
| Allow officers to make improvements to neighbourhoods based on concerns of residents, using capital investment where necessary | Invest to improve areas where an improvement has been identified, a rationale developed and a community benefit has been identified. |

Integrate Housing Services at a Neighbourhood Level

| Strategy Action | To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy |
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| Relaunch the Tenancy and Estates service to reflect a neighbourhood management and tenancy sustainment focus. | Introduce a new management approach to neighbourhoods. This will enable the delivery of the necessary improvements to neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods. |
| Increase the presence of staff in neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods | Establish at least three weekly housing surgeries where housing staff will be present |
| Increase the presence of staff in neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods | Review the work of the caretaking service and the cleaning service within neighbourhoods to ensure maximum effectiveness |
| Strategy Action | To be implemented throughout the Strategy |
| Align Housing services more closely, particularly in priority neighbourhoods. | Use priority neighbourhoods to create cross team objectives to be achieved in partnership |
| Increase support for vulnerable tenants to maximise tenancy sustainment | Increase in resources focussed on tenancy sustainment case management |

To work proactively and Intervene Early

| Strategy Action | To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy |
|---|---|
| Ensure that priority neighbourhoods are being identified correctly and tackling issues in the correct locations | Design a methodology for evaluating priority neighbourhoods and their effectiveness |
| Assess and evaluate current approaches to resolving common neighbourhood issues | Complete a review and produce recommendations |
| Ensure the effective management of communal areas, putting the health and safety of residents at the forefront | Introduce a new approach and procedure to block inspections and tackling issues in communal areas |
| Reviewing lettings arrangements in priority neighbourhoods to improve tenancy sustainment | Consider the usage of sensitive lettings or local lettings policies where necessary to assist in the management of neighbourhoods |

| Strategy Action | To be implemented throughout the Strategy |
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| Ensuring assets and the built environment have a role in the effective management of neighbourhoods | Ensure that Neighbourhood Strategy links with any asset management strategies to ensure that investment in stock and blocks is working in tandem |
| Ensure information on our performance is provided to customers | Provide performance information using a range of Housing communications |
| Improve communication with residents in neighbourhoods, particularly in priority neighbourhoods | Review communication methods with residents to ensure maximum effectiveness and impact, consulting with residents. |
| Work with the Engagement Team to improve feedback on neighbourhood improvements, such as 'You Said, We Did' bulletins | Include "You Said, We Did" features in a range of Housing communications, particularly at a neighbourhood level |

Positively engage with the Community within Neighbourhoods

| Strategy Action | To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy |
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| Work with the engagement team to increase Housing's attendance at community events to promote the work of the team and seek feedback about services | Minimum of five community events attended |
| Review procedures to see where there may be more opportunities to engage with residents over neighbourhood management issues | Introduce more informal methods of tackling neighbourhood problems and issues and embed these as part of procedural review |
| Strategy Action | To be implemented throughout the Strategy |
| Use a variety of communication methods to reach communities within neighbourhoods who have been historically difficult to reach | Develop a targeted marketing campaign around neighbourhood management and positive behaviour in neighbourhoods |
| Work with the engagement team to embed the use of informal engagement methods throughout the Housing Department | Training provided to Housing Managers on informal methods of engagement and the benefit of this approach to services |

To Work in and Strengthen Partnerships

| Strategy Action | To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy |
|--|---|
| Raise the profile of priority neighbourhoods to with partner agencies and departments to try and achieve wider engagement and wider solutions where possible | Once priority neighbourhoods have been identified, ensure that all appropriate departments and agencies are consulted, action plans distributed and teams involved further where necessary. |
| Strategy Action | To be implemented throughout the Strategy |
| Ensure an effective approach to tackling anti- | Review anti-social behaviour procedures |

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| social behaviour in priority neighbourhoods | to ensure the effective use of the tools and powers available and how these may be able to be utilised in priority neighbourhoods |
| Ensure an effective approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in priority neighbourhoods | Ensure that the neighbourhood strategy and the work in priority neighbourhoods is fed in to the Community Safety Strategy and how anti-social behaviour is tackled at a Community Safety Partnership level |
| Ensure that the Council's objective around the environment and sustainability are promoted and improvements in neighbourhoods are made | Work with the Environment section to boost recycling and reduce negative environmental factors in neighbourhoods |
| Raise the profile of our work in neighbourhoods outside of Broxtowe | Growing and varying attendance at networking forums such as the Nottinghamshire Social Housing Forum |
| Enhance and grow a partnership approach towards service delivery at a neighbourhood level | Create a Neighbourhood Management Steering Group to monitor and develop the work of the strategy and to raise its profile with partners. |