

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

Policy Owner	Tenancy and Neighbourhood Housing Manager
Version	V1
Frequency of Review	Every 3 years
Date Document Last Reviewed	n/a – new policy
Date of Next Review	Sept 2028
Equality Impact Assessment Required/Completed	Yes - Sept 2025
Data Impact Assessment Completed	Not required as the policy does not involve any notable changes to the way in which Cottsway process personal data
Reviewed By	Cottsway Customers Specialist ASB Consultant Neighbourhood Team
Approved By	Deputy Chief Executive 31/10/25

1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines our approach, considerations, and limitations when responding to housing-related concerns that fall outside the scope of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy. It applies to all our customers, including those in general needs housing, leasehold properties and shared ownership.

Cottsway sometimes receive reports where it would not be appropriate to adopt an ASB approach to manage them. This could be because the behaviour isn't unreasonable, the facts of the matter do not meet the requirements to be considered ASB, or because factors such as the environment or health and wellbeing are at the root of the issue. Trying to resolve such matters through an ASB lens can be counterproductive, lead to frustration and potentially escalate the situation.

2. Definitions

The focus of this policy is on how we address a range of behaviours that are reported to us as ASB, but do not meet the threshold to be considered as such. This may be because the reported behaviour or activity is not unreasonable, it does not meet the criteria for ASB or stems from underlying environmental factors or the health and wellbeing of those involved. While it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of scenarios, the following categories outline the types of issues that would typically fall under this policy:

Reports that do not meet our definition of ASB	Parking, DIY, children playing, garden maintenance, a one-off party, shutting of doors/cupboards, the use of household appliances, cats in gardens, cooking smells.
External/environmental factors	Location, the external environment, or the design and construction of the building e.g., poor sound insulation, cavity walls, layout of the property.
Health and Wellbeing	Behaviour that is linked to a health condition and it does not constitute ASB, or where the impact of the behaviour is amplified by a health-related issue e.g. hypersensitivity to noise
Neighbour disputes	We define a neighbour dispute as a disagreement between two or more parties, who are both contributing to the disagreement, with no clear victim or perpetrator. Often, the behaviour at the heart of the dispute does not meet the ASB definition. Examples include: disagreements over parking, boundaries, use of communal gardens, lifestyle differences, social media, the behaviour of children or a general dislike for one another.

3. Policy Scope and Objectives

The following principles underpin this policy:

- We triage reports with a focus on harm, considering behaviour and impact to decide the best response.
- We make decisions based on thorough information to ensure fairness.
- We are transparent, helping those who report concerns understand the policy, reasoning, and next steps.
- We recognise that behaviour can develop into ASB and may adjust our approach as new information comes in.
- Our goal is to encourage positive relationships, find practical solutions, and provide support rather than assigning blame. Legal action is unlikely under this policy.
- We empower individuals to resolve issues through mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation. Solutions may be limited if cooperation is not possible.
- We consider personal circumstances that affect tolerance, perception, or ability to cope, and identify suitable referrals and support.
- We collaborate with partner organisations, sharing relevant information, where permitted, to provide the best support and guidance.
- We are committed to creating inclusive communities, promoting respectful relationships, ensuring everyone feels heard and supported.

4. Regulatory and Legal Considerations

The primary regulatory framework for neighbourhood management in social housing is the Neighbourhood and Community Standard as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, also:

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014,
- Housing Acts 1998, 1996 and 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- GDPR 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

5. Stakeholder Consultation

Cottsway customers including those who have previously raised concerns relating to these matters have been consulted in the creation of this policy.

A survey was facilitated by a specialist consultant * in the field of ASB and Good Neighbourhood Management which was shared with a database of consenting customers.

Cottsway received 63 responses to this survey and the comments were taken into consideration throughout the drafting of this policy.

6. Policy Details

6.1. Triage and Assessment

When deciding if a report should be dealt with under this policy, we will consider: -

- The type of behaviour that is being reported, how serious it is and whether it is reasonable activity or not.
- The frequency, time and duration
- The needs and vulnerabilities of the parties involved
- The root cause of the issue
- Whether there is intention to cause harm.

We will seek to ensure that our decisions are informed and are based on sufficient and relevant information. In some cases, this will require some investigative work before we are able to determine our approach.

If new information or reports arise, we will reassess our decision and determine if the matter should be managed under our ASB Policy.

Whilst not an exhaustive list, the following are some examples of behaviours which are considered under this policy.

6.2. CCTV/Doorbell Cameras:

Use and Permissions - The domestic use of CCTV and video doorbells has increased in recent years. Customers who wish to install these devices should seek written permission from us and are responsible for ensuring their use complies with all relevant legislation. Guidance on legal responsibilities is available on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website.

The ICO states that people should try to ensure that CCTV cameras and video doorbells are not pointed at communal spaces or other people's property wherever possible. We recognise this is not always avoidable. For example, in a block of flats, it is difficult for a video doorbell not to capture footage of the communal corridor.

Where communal areas or others' property are recorded, the ICO advises that, to comply with the Data Protection Act, individuals should: -

- Tell people they are using recording equipment
- In most circumstances, provide the recording of the person who believes they have been recorded, if requested.
- Regularly or automatically delete footage
- Delete recordings of people if they ask, where appropriate
- Stop recording a person if they object, providing it is still possible to do so whilst still achieving the intended purpose (e.g. keeping property safe)

If someone believes that a recording device is being used in a way that does not comply with the legislation, they should contact the ICO. Cottsway are unable to enforce any breaches of the Data Protection Act as a result of non-compliance.

It is likely that the ICO will expect the individual to have first attempted to resolve the issue by speaking directly with the person operating the device.

Where the ICO finds that the guidance has not been followed, they may issue a warning letter or take further action. More information about what steps is expected before making a report can be found on the ICO's website.

Good Neighbourhood Management or ASB?

Even where a CCTV camera or video doorbell is in breach of data protection legislation, we do not automatically deem this to be ASB.

When we receive a report, we will assess the matter and determine whether it meets our definition of ASB, considering a range of factors, including but not limited to: -

If any of the above apply, we may manage the matter in line with our ASB policy and procedure.

If the concern does not meet the ASB threshold, we will continue in line with this policy.

Submitting footage as evidence

Customers may submit CCTV or video doorbell footage as evidence of behaviour. Where such footage is provided, we consider a range of factors in deciding whether we will deal with the incident.

6.3. Cannabis Smoking:

We may receive reports relating to a resident smoking cannabis in and around their home. Smoking cannabis is a criminal offence, and we encourage residents to report such matters to the Police, either directly or via Crimestoppers.

We consider cannabis smoking as a housing related issue in two ways:

- a) That the act of smoking cannabis is a criminal offence.
- b) That the odour/smoke arising from the cannabis may be causing a nuisance or annoyance and therefore be anti-social

Our Tenancy Agreements contain conditions relating to criminal activity. It is unlikely that the police will take action in response to cannabis smoking, however we will work in partnership with them and support them with any action they take.

Cannabis smoking is not automatically considered to be ASB. We take a harm-centred approach when assessing reports and consider the following: the intensity, frequency and duration of the smoke or odour; whether the person reporting it is being unreasonably impacted, such as having to alter their living arrangements or routine; and whether their health is being affected. Where a health concern is raised, we may request medical evidence.

Where we feel appropriate, and if there is admittance, we may work with the person smoking the cannabis, requiring them to take practical steps to limit the impact. Mediation may be offered to both parties through an external provider, with the aim of improving understanding and helping to find a resolution. We may also make referrals to drug support or education services where relevant.

Should the person smoking state that it is for medical use and/or that the product they are using is provided to them by a medical prescription we will require evidence of this or will progress the matter on the basis that it is for recreational use until such a time the evidence is provided to show otherwise.

Customers are expected to consume prescribed cannabis in a manner that is safe, discreet, and respectful of others. Where the use of medicinal cannabis, particularly via herbal vaporisers, results in persistent or offensive odours that cause a nuisance to neighbours or interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of their homes or communal areas, we may

investigate and take proportionate action. This may include offering support, mediation or where necessary tenancy enforcement measures.

Customers, their household member and visitors are encouraged to follow best practices for indoor use, such as ensuring adequate ventilation, using devices in private areas, and maintaining cleanliness of equipment to minimise odour.

6.4. Communal Areas:

We frequently receive reports about how communal or public areas are being used. For example, concerns around parking or activities taking place in shared gardens.

These types of issues are rarely considered ASB, as they typically reflect differing views on how shared spaces should be used, rather than behaviour that is anti-social. The focus in these situations will be encouraging parties to reach their own agreements, through understanding, negotiation and compromise.

6.5. Reports Relating to Dogs:

Customers should obtain our permission to keep a pet. Permission is granted based on the criteria outlined in our Keeping Pets Policy, which also sets out our expectations around responsible pet ownership.

All dog owners are expected to be courteous and considerate of their neighbours and communal spaces. It is important to respect that not everyone feels comfortable around dogs. For example, while a dog may be supervised and under control in a communal garden, if other residents or customers who are uneasy around dogs are present, it would be considerate to keep the dog on a lead.

It is a criminal offence for a dog to be "dangerously out of control" in any location. A dog is considered dangerously out of control if it injures someone or makes someone feel they may be injured. We encourage customers to report such incidents to the Police before contacting us.

Customers are encouraged to engage with each other to try and alleviate any fears or perceptions about dogs. Responsibility is placed on the owners to be vigilant in these situations to avoid potential disputes and complaints.

Dog fouling is a natural aspect of a dog's behaviour and not ASB in itself. However, owners have a responsibility to clean up after their pets and dispose of waste appropriately. Persistent failure to pick up after a dog is not only unpleasant but can also pose a significant public health risk. Failure to pick up and dispose of dog waste can prevent the enjoyment of communal spaces and impact the wellbeing of other residents. It may be considered ASB when it occurs repeatedly, without good reason and causes ongoing nuisance and annoyance to others.

We do not automatically consider all reports we receive relating to dogs to constitute ASB. When determining whether a situation should be managed under GNM or ASB policy, we consider a number of factors, including the following:

- Type of behaviour reported e.g., barking, dog fouling, aggression, damage, use of communal area, entering neighbour's property
- Frequency duration and time - For example, it is natural for dogs to bark as part of their communication and behaviour. However, we understand that persistent or excessive barking can cause distress to neighbours.
- Impact - Is it affecting day to day activities, use of communal space or private garden due to odour or excrement for example, sleepless nights etc
- Intent

Are there external factors influencing the behaviour, such as the health or wellbeing of the individual(s) involved, environmental factors like poor insulation/housing design/broken fence or factors relating to the pet's welfare, such as the environment in which a dog is kept or the duration it is regularly left alone?

6.6. Bonfires:

It is not illegal to have a bonfire and having a bonfire is not automatically considered ASB. Cottsway expect our customers to act considerately and respectfully towards their neighbours. If a bonfire is likely to cause a nuisance the local authority should be consulted for advice and guidance in relation to their enforcement measures.

Upon receiving reports regarding bonfires, we will assess whether the behaviour constitutes ASB. This assessment will be guided by the criteria outlined in the triage and assessment section of this policy, in conjunction with the considerations made above.

6.7. One off Parties:

A one-off party is typically not considered anti-social behaviour. It is not unreasonable to expect people to be courteous and considerate of others living around them particularly in shared communal spaces. However, if the party poses a risk to others or becomes criminal in nature these matters should be raised with the Police in the first instance.

7. Our Responsibilities

The primary goal when managing cases under this policy is to foster positive relationships and improve the health and well-being of all parties involved. Legal action is extremely unlikely in these cases.

The solutions we consider will be flexible, practical, and focused on resolving conflicts in a fair and equitable manner. These solutions will

generally fall into the following categories: self-help, practical measures, restoring relations, and support.

We are committed to handling all reported issues transparently and fairly. We do this by:

- Making fair and well-informed decisions, explaining them clearly and on time, and looking at the root causes of issues to offer practical solutions that work for everyone.
- Making reasonable adjustments for people with specific needs (such as health conditions, neurodiversity, or communication difficulties) so they can take part equally.
- Signposting and/or referring people to the right external services when needed, such as for health, wellbeing, or safety concerns, and working with those services to support good outcomes.
- Working in collaboration with relevant housing providers, private landlords, agents, or homeowners in cross tenure situations to find a workable solution.
- Promoting positive neighbourhood relationships and inclusive communities by setting clear expectations at the start of the tenancy, and by encouraging customers to engage with Cottsway's Customer Scrutiny Group, community events and estate inspections

8. Customer Responsibilities

We believe that everyone has a social responsibility to be a good neighbour and resident. This includes being courteous, respectful and considerate of others.

Effective resolution under this policy often relies on cooperation, compromise and goodwill. Customers are expected to:

- Be mindful of how their behaviour may affect their neighbours.
- Communicate calmly and early where concerns arise (when safe to do so).
- Be open to making reasonable changes to their behaviour and/or environment.
- Accept support and guidance offered, including processes such as mediation.
- Listen to the views of others and show a willingness to find a shared way forward.

Many situations under this policy will require cooperation and compromise from all parties involved, including making reasonable changes to behaviour or environment, engaging in processes like mediation, and accepting offered advice and support. If parties are unwilling to cooperate, our ability to assist may be limited, and the case may be closed.

9. Risk and Vulnerability

We recognise that even if a report is not classified as ASB, it does not automatically imply a low risk of harm or the absence of vulnerability. Sometimes a person's needs can be a contributing factor to how they perceive, respond to, or are impacted by, other people's activities. As such, we consider potential harm during the assessment stage and, following an interview with the reporter, complete a risk assessment to identify any support needs and make appropriate referrals.

10. Limitations

Where a party refuses to engage with the solution offered, without good reason, we may be unable to provide any further assistance and close the case.

We are unable to implement solutions which are considered disproportionate in terms of cost/time.

In some cases, we do not have the appropriate solutions to address the matter. For example, we are not responsible for addressing structural or property issues in properties that we do not own. In such cases, the responsibility lies with the homeowner, private landlord, managing agent, or housing provider, as applicable.

We may have limited control over certain environmental factors. For instance, a person living in a town centre near a bus or train station, or close to a late-night venue, may experience higher levels of noise from footfall, particularly at peak travel times or closing hours. While we understand the impact this can have, such factors are beyond our direct control. Where appropriate, we will work with partners such as transport operators, venue managers, and the police to help manage or mitigate any associated disturbance.

Our ability to offer a move is limited by our availability of housing stock. All of the requests for a managed move will be treated in accordance with our lettings and allocations policy and will be in exceptional circumstances.

11. Partnership Working

Reports dealt with under this policy may often require a multi-agency response, especially when the situation is exacerbated by unmet needs of one or more parties involved. Cottsway may not have the full range of resources or expertise required to address all aspects of the situation, we will work with external agencies to provide the necessary support and ensure effective resolution.

To facilitate partnership working in good neighbourhood management cases we will consider and action the following, where appropriate to each given case:

- Refer any safeguarding/well-being concerns to the relevant agency.

- Share information with partners to ensure full information is known by all relevant parties, allowing informed and appropriate decisions to be made.
- Arrange a professional meeting to create a clear action plan.

12. Closing a case

There are several reasons why we may close a case dealt with under this policy, including:

- The problems have been resolved or reduced to a level that parties agree is reasonable
- Either or all parties are not engaging/cooperating
- There is no further action that is reasonable or available to us.

13. Communication

We are committed to delivering clear, consistent, and timely communication throughout the life of a case to ensure all parties remain informed and engaged with any proposed solutions. Our approach includes:

- Promptly informing the reporter if their concern will be addressed under this policy, with a clear explanation provided.
- Creating and reviewing an action plan that outlines next steps for both us and the customer, establishes communication methods, and ensures the reporter remains informed and engaged.
- Notifying all relevant parties when a case is closed, offering a clear explanation for closure, guidance on how to raise future concerns, and information on how to provide feedback or make a complaint, as outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring communication is clear and accessible, tailored to individual needs and preferences, using appropriate methods such as phone, email, letter, or in-person meetings.
- Communicating professionally and sensitively, particularly when discussing complex or distressing issues.

14. Persistent, Malicious or Unreasonable Behaviour

We understand that a customer may be disappointed with our decision not to classify their report as ASB, or the solutions that we are able to offer.

We aim to ensure that we are clear, transparent and fair, providing information about the reason for our decision. However, repeated unreasonable contact may result in the matter being managed under our Customer Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

15. Monitoring and Reporting

GNM cases are regularly reviewed by the case officer and/or their line manager, to ensure they are progressing in a timely and effective manner and that any risks have been identified and managed.

This service will be captured as part of our performance indicator monitoring framework and regularly reviewed by CLT.

16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Cottsway will treat all customers with fairness and respect. We recognise that we have an ethical and a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination on the grounds of age, sex and sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership

We will aim to ensure that the individual needs of our customers are met in implementing this policy by having due regard to the Equality Act 2010, for example the provision of translated materials, or home visits with a carer or access to other support agencies if appropriate

We have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the creation of this policy.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or sooner if there are any changes in legislation and/or recommendations by the Audit and Risk Committee or the business which may trigger an earlier review.

18. Associated Documents Policies and Procedures

The following policies/procedures are relevant to this policy:

- Equality, diversity and Inclusion
- Lettings Policy/Procedure
- Estate Management Policy
- ASB Policy/Procedure
- Data protection
- Customer Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- Complaints
- Keeping Pets Policy
- Vulnerable Tenants policy

List of changes

Date	Change
29.09.25	New policy

Reference

**Denotes reference to Green and Burton Associates who facilitated the online survey for Cottsway and collated the responses.*