



HOUSING ESTATE AND COMMUNAL AREAS POLICY

“Making South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit”

Corporate objectives

Important to the success of the District and delivery of services are:

- People
- Place
- Progress
- Outcomes

Through continual improvement of our services, we will deliver connected communities and ensure that South Derbyshire continues to prosper.

Service aims

We aim to keep residents happy health and safe. To manage this, we need to ensure that the services we deliver are efficient and effective and meet the increased expectations of our customers, and that we deliver:

- A range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure
- Well maintained safer greener homes
- Repair and maintain properties to agreed standards

What we do

The Housing Services Team manages both the Council-owned homes and land and communal space around these dwellings. Under the terms of our Tenancy Agreements, we are bound by contract and statute to maintain these areas for tenants.

Our services include:

- Grass cutting
- Cleaning of streets and communal spaces
- Tree hedge and shrub bed maintenance
- Fly tipping
- Abandoned vehicles

Grass cutting

We cut grass to ensure that people can use roads and pavements around council owned properties safely and also to enhance the appearance of communal gardens and the properties within them.

Grass in amenity areas around blocks of flats and in communal gardens is cut 16 times a year.

We use the largest possible mowers to make cutting as efficient as possible. Sometimes, these machines can't cut close enough to trees and bases of obstacles and we use a strimmer to ensure a consistent cut across all areas on every cut.

Cleaning of streets and communal spaces

Our standards for keeping streets and other public spaces clean and tidy, involve:

- Road channels are cleaned four times a year, main routes 11 times a year
- Footways are swept twice a year
- On rural roads, we pick up litter once a year, on main roads three times a year and, for urban areas, 12 times a year
- Road gullies are cleaned once a year; twice a year on major routes

Our street cleansing services include a Rapid Response Unit (The Clean Team) to clean up fly-tipping, dog fouling, syringes, litter, fly-posting, graffiti or hazardous substances. In sensitive locations, we will deal with instances of dog fouling within 12 hours.

Large items of rubbish/refuse left in communal areas will be removed within 48 hours.

Tree Maintenance

Trees on Housing land are managed under the Council's Tree Management Policy (2011) under which we:

- Undertake inspections and surveys of trees growing in open space we own and we will inspect trees for safety and identify appropriate remedial arboricultural works.
- Inspect trees following requests from residents who suspect trees are dangerous, or causing a nuisance (tenants not being permitted to undertake arboricultural works (planting, pruning or felling) themselves.
- Investigate and aim to resolve tree issues where ownership is in dispute.
- Replant where possible and practical, using suitable species with a view to creating a balance between native and exotic trees.
- Aim to increase the tree stock on large open expanses of short mown grass where this is deemed appropriate.

Trees within the boundary of supported housing schemes are inspected annually

Hedge Maintenance

Hedge cutting will take place twice a year. Shrubs will be cut once a year in the winter months, plus sight-line cutting, to include any overhang on footpaths, in late August where needed. In all cases, cutting will take place outside the core time for birds nesting.

Shrub Bed Maintenance

Shrub beds and planted areas will be weeded and topped up with mulch/chippings annually.

Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping is illegally dumped rubbish. We take incidents seriously and will issue £400 penalty notices or prosecute anyone caught fly-tipping waste.

Tenants, their family or visitors found to be fly tipping will be subject to action under the terms of their tenancy agreement.

The fly-tipping of controlled waste is a serious criminal offence which carries a fine of up to £50,000 (unlimited if dealt with at the Crown Court) or an offender can even be sent to prison. It is important to realise it is also an offence to allow fly-tipping.

Abandoned vehicles

We have a statutory duty to deal with vehicles abandoned on the highways, housing land, local amenity land and other areas of land controlled by us. We also have some limited powers to remove vehicles from private land.

In most cases where we consider that a vehicle is abandoned we can issue a legal notice requiring it to be removed in seven days. In extreme circumstances, we can issue a 24-hour removal notice.

Measuring our performance

Throughout our work, we aim to set clear targets and measure our achievement. We will measure the satisfaction of our tenants with the services provided around their homes through the regular STAR satisfaction survey.

The 2015 survey returned the following results.

Estate Services

Cleaning and Maintenance Services

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following ...?								
	Net Satisfied (%)	Net Dissatisfied (%)	Very satisfied (%)	Fairly satisfied (%)	Neither (%)	Fairly dissatisfied (%)	Very dissatisfied (%)	N/A (%)
The overall appearance of your neighbourhood	86.9	7.7	42.6	44.3	4.8	4.9	2.8	0.6
Ground maintenance, such as grass cutting, in your area	78.9	11.5	37.6	41.3	6.9	6.9	4.7	2.7
Cleaning of external communal areas	54.6	9.0	24.6	30.0	14.5	4.7	4.3	22.0