

To: Council

On: 12 December 2024

Report by: Lead Officer on behalf of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Heading: Neighbour Disputes

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the meeting on 22nd August 2022, members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2022/23. This included a review into neighbour disputes in Renfrewshire as part of the programme of activity.
 - 1.2 Over a period of months and as part of the annual programme, reports have been presented to the Board by the Lead Officer on the subject of neighbour disputes in its widest sense, including antisocial behaviour.
 - 1.3 In undertaking this review, the Lead Officer interviewed Elected Members, key Council officers involved in different aspects of neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour, local Housing Associations, Police Scotland and 17 other Scottish Local Authorities, as well as speaking to residents with lived experience of neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour.
 - 1.4 This report describes the purpose and scope of the review, including summaries of information reported to each Board meeting, the key findings and concludes with the recommendations, which can be found in Section 12.
 - 1.5 The review has provided assurance to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. The Board agreed the final report at its 23rd September 2024 meeting.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - note the findings and approve the recommendations within this report
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3. Background

- 3.1 There is no single agreed definition for what constitutes a neighbour dispute. For the purposes of the review, the definition used is a “disagreement between neighbours that causes stress or friction”. A range of neighbour disputes may not reach a

threshold where they would be dealt with through antisocial behaviour legislation, such as disputes over communal areas, misuse of bins or storage of waste, parking, high hedges and boundary disputes.

- 3.2 In some instances of neighbour disputes a statutory nuisance may occur, when the activity of an individual or business on their own premises unreasonably detracts from another's enjoyment of their property or causes a risk to public health. This can include noise, artificial light, odour, keeping of animals and accumulation of waste.
- 3.3 Some neighbour disputes can be classified as antisocial behaviour as defined in the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004, whereby a person acts "in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or pursues a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to at least one person who is not of the same household as them".
- 3.4 The Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004 requires all local authorities to publish a strategy jointly with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland for their Council area. Renfrewshire Council approved a new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022-25 in March 2022, setting out how the Council and its key Community Safety partners will address antisocial behaviour in Renfrewshire.

4. Purpose and Scope of the Review

- 4.1 At the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in August 2022 it was agreed that the review of neighbour disputes be looked at in the widest sense and should also include antisocial behaviour. It was agreed that the purpose of the investigation into neighbour disputes would be fourfold:
 1. Try to establish the scale and nature of neighbour disputes in Renfrewshire,
 2. Set out the current arrangements and approaches the Council and other stakeholders have for responding to neighbour disputes,
 3. Review the current disposals/actions that are available to the Council and others to resolve neighbour disputes, and
 4. Identify any other approaches, policy changes or mitigating actions that could be available to the Council within existing resources.
- 4.2 Following the initial report to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in March 2023, there was a change in Lead Officer. This change in Lead Officer impacted the original timescales of the review.

5. Antisocial Behaviour National Review

- 5.1 During this local review for the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, the Scottish Government Review on Antisocial Behaviour was published (7th November 2023). The national review advocates a refreshed, long-term approach to antisocial behaviour, with a more preventative and supportive focus in preventing antisocial behaviour from occurring in the first place.
- 5.2 There is recognition of the age of the antisocial behaviour legislation and societal changes over the past 20 years. The national review recommended an independently chaired group of experts, including statutory, non-statutory and voluntary service providers and key community representatives, to develop a long-term framework for addressing antisocial behaviour with a strong focus on steps that can be taken to prevent antisocial behaviour in the first place as well as considering the effectiveness of current approaches to tackling antisocial behaviour that does occur.

- 5.3 Further consideration as part of the national refresh may also include:
- the definition of antisocial behaviour
 - legislation and guidance
 - increased powers
 - reporting, including support and outcomes
 - general approach, including partnership working and public information
 - person-centred and trauma-informed approaches

6. The Scale of Neighbour Disputes within Renfrewshire

- 6.1 Within Renfrewshire, there is no single source of data relating to neighbour disputes. Data for the initial stage of the review was drawn from public and voluntary services who have a responsibility relating to neighbour disputes, including Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Council and Police Scotland.
- 6.2 It is acknowledged there will be additional neighbour disputes which services remain unaware of. Also, there may be overlap across datasets, e.g. cases where the Police respond initially then Community Safety or Housing investigate more fully and record.
- 6.3 Analysis showed that, with the exception of domestic noise complaints reported to the Council, there has been a sustained increase in the number of incidents/complaints of neighbour disputes in Renfrewshire over the last 3-4 years. This aligned with the national picture, based on responses from 17 other Scottish Local Authorities.
- 6.4 Renfrewshire Council Officers (as well as other Local Authorities, Housing Associations and Police Scotland) reported that changes in levels and nature of disputes was found to be initially due to the pandemic and lockdown, with people at home more. This links with a clash of lifestyles, which was reported as a major factor in neighbour disputes, and noise complaints, including situations such as different working patterns, where one party may leave early for work, or return late at night.

7. Domestic CCTV

- 7.1 An area of growth in neighbour disputes relates to the use of domestic CCTV systems, including smart doorbells, fitted by individuals in their homes.
- 7.2 The data protection regulator is the Information Commissioner. Privacy concerns about the use of devices (including individuals involved in a neighbour dispute over domestic CCTV) should be raised with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- 7.3 The Council's powers in relation to domestic CCTV are limited to its installation by Council tenants. Under the tenancy agreement, tenants should not make any changes to fixtures and fittings in and around their home until they have received written permission from the Council. Although permission may be needed for the erection of CCTV cameras, the Council's remit does not extend to approving or policing the processing of personal data by private individuals and the Council does not have any enforcement powers in relation to privacy infringement.

8. Review of Processes Across Scottish Local Authorities

General Neighbour Disputes Findings

- 8.1 Contact was made with the other 31 Scottish Local Authorities and a range of local Housing Associations, with questions on neighbour disputes and anti-social

behaviour. 17 local authorities responded (55%) and 3 local housing associations. A Renfrewshire Local Authority Liaison Officer representative from Police Scotland also assisted the review on processes within Renfrewshire.

- 8.2 There are differences across the 32 local authorities in how neighbour disputes are dealt with. Renfrewshire Council support and respond to all tenures. This is not the case across Scotland. Some local authorities will support and respond to all tenures; others would support and respond to Council Housing tenants only (where they have Housing stock) and signpost other tenures to alternative organisations; and others support and respond to all social housing tenants only.
- 8.3 The most common sources of neighbour disputes were similar across all local authorities and housing associations – relating to noise, waste (misuse of bins, including not putting out for collection, using bins belonging to others and placement of bins when out for collection) and issues relating to gardens and communal spaces.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution

- 8.4 Mediation is a recognised early intervention tool to help neighbours resolve difficulties, with around 90% success rate¹ for sustainable outcomes, i.e. did not have to contact the local authorities again.
- 8.5 Again, there were differences in provision of service – some Local Authorities (including Renfrewshire Council) provide mediation free of charge to all tenures. Others charge for non-Council Housing tenants, including charging Registered Social Landlords who refer to the service. The remainder either provided no service or would signpost to mediation services offered by SACRO (a Scottish community justice organisation) at the residents' cost.

Trauma Informed and Responsive Services

- 8.6 Being a victim of neighbour nuisance or anti-social behaviour can have a huge impact on people's lives and affect mental health and wellbeing. It is key to ensure that support is available for those suffering from unreasonable behaviour. The need to support those perpetrating anti-social behaviour to change behaviours was also raised. Reasons behind this behaviour can be complex – the behaviour can be driven by trauma as well as triggering a trauma response in those that it is affecting.
- 8.7 Renfrewshire Council has recognised the importance of trauma informed and responsive services, and training has been rolled out across Housing Services and Community Safety teams due to the front-facing nature of their roles.

Noise Monitoring

- 8.8 Noise nuisance was reported as one of the top complaints of neighbour disputes and/or anti-social behaviour across local authorities and housing associations.
- 8.9 When noise issue is persistent over time, residents are encouraged to keep a diary of dates and times of noise disturbance. MATRON (or similar) formal noise recording systems may then be used to gain corroboration for difficult to prove noise nuisance cases, with the system being installed in the house of the complainer to monitor noise levels and used to take further action against perpetrators where appropriate.
- 8.10 In addition to formal noise recording systems, a number of local authorities use a 'noise app'. Renfrewshire Council is exploring this option, which enables residents to submit noise complaints via mobile devices as it is happening without the need for a formal recording system to be installed in the property, enabling local authorities to identify areas of need for MATRON system to be installed.

¹ Figures provided via the Antisocial Behaviour Officers' Forum (ASBOF)

Multi-Agency Meetings

- 8.11 All local authorities who responded hold multi-agency meetings – with key organisations including Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Housing Associations and other local partners such as those involved in mental health support services and addiction services. The aim is to ensure early intervention and a coordinated partnership approach to ensure solutions are delivered effectively and efficiently and with knowledge sharing and input across organisations.
- 8.12 The frequency of these scheduled multi-agency meetings varied across local authorities. Renfrewshire’s model involves daily tasking meetings, whereas some local authorities met with partner agencies every other day, or every 3 days.
- 8.13 Renfrewshire has established a Community Safety Partnership Hub consisting of statutory, voluntary and community organisations based on the MARAC model (multi-agency risk assessment conference). This approach is recognised as best practice and combines a broad range of services to support communities through targeting anti-social behaviour, its causes and effects and ensures a robust approach to tackling public protection issues affecting residents in Renfrewshire.

9. Legislation and Regulatory Processes

- 9.1 Across local authorities different teams are involved with different aspects of neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour. This is true of Renfrewshire Council, whereby specific teams deal with different aspects of neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour, dependent on the legislation it falls under and/or potential actions – between Housing Services, Community Safety and/or Environmental Health teams.
- 9.2 There is a close working relationship between the teams, as well as with the Multi Agency Community Safety Partnership Hub to ensure patterns are picked up and responses can be targeted where needed.
- 9.3 Actions taken in all cases must be proportionate to the incident and complaints are classified using 4 key categories. The category the incident falls under will determine the process followed and the legislation that is applied:

Category	Definition	Example
A	Serious antisocial behaviour	Drug dealing, hate crime, violence
B	Antisocial behaviour	Frequent disturbances, excessive noise
C	Nuisance Cases	Vandalism, infrequent disturbances and private ownership
D	Estate management as a result of either complaints or observations	Dispute over communal areas, including cleaning close; use of drying green; dog fouling; misuse of bins or storage of waste

Housing Services Processes & Legislation: Neighbour Disputes & Antisocial Behaviour

- 9.4 Renfrewshire Council’s Housing Service follows a set of procedural steps in proportion to the incident in question. This ranges from visits to both parties; mediation referrals; support agency referrals; and verbal and written warnings, up to reducing tenancy rights and eviction in the most serious cases.
- 9.5 Most cases are resolved in the early steps of the process, through the early intervention measures of visits and warnings. For more persistent or serious cases of nuisance and antisocial behaviour, social landlords, including Renfrewshire Council, have two main levers that can be used:

1. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: the key statutory guidance aimed at social landlords, including allowing landlords to issue Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs) to address antisocial behaviour and Streamlined Evictions where there has been a recent criminal conviction punishable by imprisonment for tenancy related antisocial or criminal behaviour within the previous 12 months.

2. Tenancy Agreements: set out the legal rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and the landlord, including levels of behaviour expected from tenants, members of their household and visitors to their home.

- 9.6 Renfrewshire Council's tenancy agreements make it clear that breaches as a result of antisocial behaviour may result in legal action to evict, or a reduction in tenancy rights. A reduction in tenant's rights is a result of converting a tenancy from a Scottish Secure Tenancy (whereby tenants have the right to stay in the home for as long as they wish provided they do not breach the terms of the tenancy) to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST), where tenants only have security for the specified period of the tenancy (a minimum of 6 months, up to 12 months) because of particular circumstances, including antisocial behaviour. Tenants must then comply with specified conditions in order to retain the tenancy.
- 9.7 At the end of the specified term of a SSST conversion due to antisocial behaviour, if issues have been resolved and no further action is required/taken the tenancy converts automatically back to a Scottish Secure Tenancy again.
- 9.8 Following a request, an order for eviction may be granted by the Sheriff Court under Section 14 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 on any of the grounds within Section 2 of the Act, which includes antisocial behaviour in relation to an action or course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance.
- 9.9 Local authorities have a statutory duty to rehouse and eviction is a last resort. There are often more complex needs, and cross-agency working is key to ensure access to services and support, and to prevent people from falling through the gaps in services.

Environmental Health: Key Processes and Legislation

- 9.10 In cases of statutory nuisance (which can include issues with noise, accumulations of waste, artificial light), procedural steps are followed ranging from visits to the source of the issue, mediation referrals and verbal and written warnings, to issuing abatement notices and Fixed Penalty Notices.
- 9.11 Most cases are resolved in the early steps of the process without the need for further escalation. For the more persistent or serious cases of statutory nuisance the main levers that can be used by the Council are:
- 1. The Environmental Protection Act 1990:** provisions within Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 set out what can and can't be dealt with as statutory nuisance.
 - 2. Abatement Notice:** a legal document that imposes specific requirements on the recipient with timescales, to abate the nuisance or mitigate to a point that it is no longer causing a nuisance, including noise abatement.
 - 3. Fixed Penalty Notice:** before a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued under the Environmental Protection Act, an Abatement Notice must have been served. The Abatement Notice must have expired without the problem being resolved and there must be a further breach of the Abatement Notice before a Fixed Penalty Notice can be served. These are generally used for low level nuisances.

Community Safety Team: Key Processes and Legislation

- 9.12 The Community Safety Team and multi-agency partners within the Community Safety Partnership deal with antisocial behaviour.
- 9.13 Most complaints are resolved in the earlier stages of the process through early intervention measures and cross-service working in the Council and in the Community Safety Hub. For persistent antisocial behaviour the main levers are:
- 1. The Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004:** the Act makes provision in connection with antisocial behaviour to deal with people who cause alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public. The Act also gives powers to address neighbour noise issues, such as from parties and loud music which causes undue nuisance.
 - 2. Interim Antisocial Behaviour Orders:** allow the Sheriff Courts to grant an order to provide more immediate protection from antisocial behaviour prior to a full court hearing (around 6 weeks).
 - 3. Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs):** preventative orders intended to protect people in the community affected by antisocial behaviour from further acts or conduct that would cause them alarm or distress. ASBOs are court orders which prohibit, either indefinitely or for a specified period of time, the individual from doing anything described in the order. An ASBO is made in the civil court, however, breach of an order is a criminal offence.
- 9.14 While registered social landlords, including Renfrewshire Council's Housing Service, may seek antisocial behaviour orders or even eviction as a last resort, they have no powers to evict private tenants and/or owner occupiers. However, other services within the Council and Police Scotland may have some powers that can be used to influence people to modify their behaviour depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, e.g. a private landlord who fails the 'fit and proper' test by not dealing with antisocial behaviour of tenants could have their landlord registration revoked under Section 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004.

10. Current Estate Management Initiatives and the Estate Management Workshop

- 10.1 The Council's approach to estate management and community safety is underpinned by the strategic outcomes in the Renfrewshire Council Plan 2022-2027. A key strategic outcome is Place and working together to enhance wellbeing across communities.
- 10.2 The review initially focused on Category B and C antisocial behaviour and neighbour nuisance complaints. In the course of the review, and in particular speaking with those with lived experience of neighbour nuisance and antisocial behaviour, the opportunity for an additional focus on Category D incidents (classed as estate management) emerged.

Current Estate Management Initiatives

- 10.3 There are a large number of examples of good practice being delivered by the Council across estate management and community safety. Examples include:
- **the Neighbourhood Environmental Trainee Team (NETT):** made up of a Supervisor and a number of trainees seeking employment (aged 16-65) who carry out work 1 day per week in each of the 4 Housing Neighbourhoods, with a particular focus on known 'hot spots'.
 - **Renfrewshire Council's Tenant Satisfaction Survey:** carried out every 2 years, this is a valuable measure of success (although responses are from Council tenants only, not all tenures) that can be used to compare results of initiatives in future years.
 - **Moorpark Regeneration Project:** Neighbourhood Services team, in collaboration with Housing Services, carried out a targeted intervention in the Moorpark area,

focusing on environmental maintenance tasks. This provided a model for similar interventions across Renfrewshire, with lessons learned and best practices developed being integrated into the Council's broader environmental management strategies, helping to ensure sustained improvements in other communities.

- **Cross-Service Collaboration:** regular meetings to discuss Neighbourhood Operations, providing Housing Services, Neighbourhood Services, Public Protection and Waste Services a platform for continuous dialogue, allowing emerging issues to be addressed promptly and adapting strategies as needed.

- **Team Up 2 Clean Up:** an exemplar Council and community partnership working to create a brighter, more attractive Renfrewshire through community initiatives including community litter picks and Take the Lead campaign (an initiative to encourage responsible dog ownership and working together to reduce dog fouling and anti-social behaviour across Renfrewshire).

- **Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance:** Renfrewshire Council has a 14 day grass cutting and grounds maintenance cycle between April and October and tackle a different area of Renfrewshire each day, maintaining open spaces, school playing fields, public parks, sports pitches and cemeteries as well as grass cutting and hedge cutting for some residents and Council Housing tenants who require garden assistance or have common maintenance areas.

- **Data Sharing and Continuous Improvement:** between all key Services to support ongoing development and refinement of maintenance programmes, ensuring operations are responsive to the needs of the community and allows immediate concerns to be addressed, but also to shape future work within the 4 Housing Neighbourhood areas, contributing to long-term improvements.

- 10.4 Alongside acknowledging the good practice and high quality services that are delivered daily, a key action in the Council Plan 2022-2027 is around ensuring we understand our service delivery, potential gaps in our approaches and have plans for improvement through ongoing self-assessment.
- 10.5 A workshop was held in August 2024, with key internal stakeholders represented from Housing Services; Environmental Health; Tasking and Development; Neighbourhood Services; Waste Services; and Procurement. Key areas discussed included individual and communal gardens and hedges, waste (including misuse of bins, storage of waste), communal areas and general nuisance, such as dog fouling and dog barking.
- 10.6 The workshop was extremely positive, with officers highlighting opportunities for improved flow of information and working collaboratively to identify:
 - existing good practice across a range of neighbourhood initiatives
 - opportunities for improvement
 - potential approaches and targeting of activity within existing resources
- 10.7 The key actions proposed by the group to be considered for further exploration are set out below. These proposed actions would require to be fully costed, with robust business case development. Viable proposals with impacts or changes in budget or policy would then be taken to the appropriate Board(s) for approval:
 - Housing Services to work together with Neighbourhood Services on work programming to identify an optimum service delivery model that meets the needs of both Services. This includes reviewing the deployment of existing resources to consider a dedicated team to work across properties and grounds related to Council Housing for grass cutting and cyclical maintenance, including winter works programming, and coordination ahead of recruitment to ensure sufficient resourcing.
 - explore the potential expansion of the Neighbourhood Environmental Trainee Team alongside additional potential training opportunities.
 - Procurement, Neighbourhood Services, Housing Services and Environmental Health to review the Council Wide Specialist Cleaning, Clearing and Ad Hoc Services

framework, to explore the specification of this contract and identify opportunities to optimise service delivery.

11. Key Findings of the Review

- 11.1 **Overall Approach:** Renfrewshire Council's processes and partnership working when dealing with neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour are of a high standard across all key areas. This has been assessed based on benchmarking taking into account research and interviews with other local authorities, local Housing Associations and Police Scotland. Processes are clear; assistance is available to all tenures; Renfrewshire Council provides services which are not consistently provided across all local authorities; and trauma informed training has been rolled out to frontline staff to assist when dealing with those impacted by neighbour disputes and/or antisocial behaviour, as well as dealing with those who may be perpetrating the behaviour.
- 11.2 **Early Intervention:** The majority of complaints received by staff are resolved at an early stage and do not escalate to formal stages. All organisations interviewed as part of the review agreed that preventative work, community relations and early intervention are key to resolve issues and prevent potential future escalation.
- 11.3 **Estate Management:** Interviews with other local authorities and also with residents with lived experience of neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour, highlighted issues related with estate management as a common source of neighbour disputes. Issues, including storage of waste, misuse of bins, dog fouling and communal spaces can be a source of initial tension which, if not captured early, have the potential to cause neighbour relationships to break down and/or lead to disputes escalating. The Estate Management workshop highlighted a range of good practice examples that are already being undertaken collaboratively with regards to estate management, with some additional opportunities to share knowledge between Services operating within Estates being considered in scheduling and deployment to streamline and enhance activity.
- 11.4 **Communication:**
1. early intervention includes a need for cases to be reported as early as possible. Information to members of the public around how to report issues, with the options available to different tenures was believed to be key. Clear advice on how to make a complaint and who should be contacted can avoid delays in the early stages of the process, improving the process for the complainer.
 2. it is important to manage expectations and be clear on when the Council can and can't take action. It can be frustrating for the complainer if their complaint doesn't meet the threshold for further action (or if corroboration can't be secured). Communication should include ensuring complainers are aware of potential next steps or alternative options (e.g. civil action) and any cost implications this may have.
 3. for complaints where investigations/follow up action is being taken, keeping complainers informed is key at all stages of the process. Gathering evidence can be a painstaking and time consuming process and when regular updates are not given, it can lead to frustration on the part of the complainer and a feeling that they are not being listened to or their case is not being dealt with, when this is not the case.
 4. staff turnover is unavoidable but can be a source of uncertainty for those whose home lives and/or mental health are being impacted by antisocial behaviour and/or neighbour disputes. Handovers, including informing complainers of any changes to case officers or impacts to timescales, helps to maintain strong relationships.

- 11.5 **Partnership Working:**
1. Partnership working is key to tackling anti-social behaviour. The importance of cross-agency collaboration in understanding and responding to incidents of anti-social behaviour was highlighted by all organisations and a whole system approach with partnership solutions was agreed to be the most effective way of preventing and addressing antisocial behaviour.
 2. Renfrewshire's Community Safety Hub model is seen as best practice due to the joined up working of services collectively address the widespread issues that need to be taken account of in a holistic way to address antisocial behaviour. This collaborative approach has a preventative focus alongside support for victims, but also includes support for those involved in antisocial behaviour, including ensuring access to recovery services and mental health support services where needed.
- 11.6 **Complex Root Causes:** many organisations highlighted mental health being impacted by the pandemic and further exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. They are seeing a rise in complex cases, particularly in relation to mental health and addiction. Cross-agency working is pivotal to ensure access to services and support, and prevent people from falling through the gaps in services. Trauma informed training to frontline staff at Renfrewshire Council has been well received and of great value to assist officers in their roles, and cases of increasing complexities.
- 11.7 **Current Legislation:** there was consensus when speaking with Local Authorities and other key stakeholders and organisations that community safety has changed over the last ten years and that there may be areas of legislation that could be strengthened to assist frontline staff in their roles.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 **Overall Approach:** the Council has been engaged in the process of the national refresh to prevent and tackle antisocial behaviour, and it is recommended that this continues through all channels to influence improved outcomes; improved resources and tools for dealing with neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour; and identification of potential improvements to legislation that could enhance the work undertaken at a local level. It should be noted that once these national outcomes are determined, a local refresh of processes and/or training may be required.
- 12.2 **Estate Management:** It is recommended that the following actions are undertaken as a result of cross-departmental discussions. These proposed actions would require to be fully costed, with robust business case development. Viable proposals with impacts or changes in budget or policy would then be taken to the appropriate Board(s) for approval:
- a collaborative approach to identify an optimum service delivery model to meet the needs of Neighbourhood Services and Housing Services, including exploring allocation of a Housing-specific resource for grass cutting and cyclical maintenance and maintenance of void properties.
 - exploration of delivery models which could enable the expansion of grass cutting service provision for Council Housing tenants who are unable to maintain a garden.
 - exploration of the expansion of the Neighbourhood Environmental Trainee Team to support the Council alongside additional potential training opportunities.
 - Cross-Service review of the Council Wide Specialist Cleaning, Clearing and Ad Hoc Service framework, exploring impacts on internal capacity, resourcing and cost/saving implications of delivery of these work packages to current Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and opportunities to optimise service delivery.

- 12.3 **Training and Development around Complex Root Causes:** It is recommended that trauma informed training is extended to include Environmental Health Officers (in addition to Housing Officers and the Community Safety team), as EHOs are experiencing an increase in complex cases and instances where mental health is a factor in behaviours and/or responses. Refresher training for all Officers is also recommended on a set rolling programme, from a staff development point of view as well as a strategic point of view as principles are transferable and can be applied in a range of community settings.
- 12.4 **Additional Tools and Technology:** It is recommended that Services continue to explore additional tools to assist reporting, including the use of digital technology that may be available to increase options for reporting.
- 12.5 **Communication:** It is recommended that the Service:
- carries out a review of correspondence letters issued at each stage of the process from a trauma-informed perspective to align with findings of the benefits of this approach highlighted as part of the enhanced training from Officers, as well as findings from across other areas of the Council.
 - carries out a refresh of the website content to ensure that it is as informative and accessible as possible. This includes encouraging early reporting through clearly identified channels to assist early interventions; signposting to agencies and support; inclusive and clear language; and information to assist understanding of where follow up action can and can't be taken by the Council and partner organisations to ensure clarity for those seeking advice online. This should include promotion of availability of guidance in different languages to ensure access for all within our multi-lingual communities.
 - continues to recognise the need for traditional methods of reporting and communication and the need for services to be promoted through non-digital means, e.g. how to report issues and support that is available, including mediation and victim support to assist early intervention and encourage early reporting through tenant newsletters, community newsletters, posters in community spaces, libraries, etc. This aligns with recent findings in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which found that just over a third of Council tenants did not use the internet and should include promotion of availability of guidance in different languages to ensure access for all within our multi-lingual communities.
- 12.6 As this report does not propose any policy or service change, no equality and human rights impact assessments are required at this time. However, if any change to policy or service position were to be proposed, then full equality and human rights assessments would be required and assessment made in line with the Council's Fairer Scotland Duty by the service responsible.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None directly arising from this report.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None directly arising from this report.
3. **Community/Council Planning** - None directly arising from this report.
4. **Legal** - None directly arising from this report.
5. **Property/Assets** – None directly arising from this report.
6. **Information Technology** – None directly arising from this report.
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have not been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights- as the paper sets out the scope for a review process rather than proposing any changes to services. If any change to policy or service position were to be considered in future, a full equality and human rights impact assessment will be undertaken.
8. **Health and Safety** - None directly arising from this report.
9. **Procurement** - None directly arising from this report.
10. **Risk** - None directly arising from this report.
11. **Privacy Impact** - None directly arising from this report.
12. **Climate Risk** - None directly arising from this report.
13. **Children’s Rights** - None directly arising from this report.
14. **COSLA Policy Position** - No impacts directly arising from this report.

List of Background Papers:

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Annual Programme
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, January 2023
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, March 2023
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, January 2024
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, March 2024
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, May 2024
Neighbour Disputes Paper - Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, September 2024

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Chief Executive’s Service for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the Service is the Climate Emergency Lead Officer, Roz Smith, who can be contacted at roz.smith@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Author: Roz Smith, Climate Emergency Lead Officer, Chief Executive’s Service