

FENCING POLICY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This document describes the policy that underpins Cambridge City Council's (CCC) approach to new and replacement fencing on the Council owned land and boundaries.
- 1.2. It includes criteria for the allocation of annual resources, minimum requirements for individual situations, response times and specifications for the materials to be used to ensure a consistent appearance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement for CCC properties, the Council is responsible for maintaining boundary walls and fences within its ownership. The Tenancy Agreement does not, however specify the type of boundary walls and fences to be provided.
- 2.2. The Council's properties have significant lengths of boundary fencing and a wide range of different boundary fencing materials and styles.
- 2.3. The provision, replacement or repair of boundary fencing is a high priority for residents who have concerns about security and protection of their properties.
- 2.4. Maintaining the quality of boundary fencing also has a significant impact on the overall appearance of our housing stock, CCC routinely undertakes fencing repairs and installation as part of its estate improvement programme.
- 2.5. Demand for fencing often exceeds resources available and there is a need for a consistent and transparent policy to manage demand and deliver the work fairly within budgetary constraints.
- 2.6. Please note: CCC is not responsible for maintaining, enforcing or repairing freeholders' boundaries and fences. If it is not a Council owned boundary then any dispute is a civil matter. However, if a tenant raises a dispute with the Council in these cases, Place Group will write to the owner occupier to request they resolve the issue, and the tenant to explain that they have contacted the owner occupier but cannot enforce any action. These letter templates can be found in the Appendix.
- 2.7. If the matter is a health and safety issue then it can be referred to Environmental Health - env.health@cambridge.gov.uk.

2.8. If the request to resolve the fencing issue is not acted upon CCC will have no further involvement and the tenant will be able to seek civil action.

3. FENCING STANDARDS

FOR COUNCIL HOUSES & FLATS	
Area	Type of fencing to be installed
Front garden – dividing fences	900mm high PVC coated pre-galvanised wire chain-link fence with concrete posts.
Front garden – boundary fence adjoining highway	900mm high(nominal) timber fence to match existing style (panel/close boarded/picket) with concrete posts. Double gates to be installed only if there is a dropped kerb and driveway. <u>Note:</u> Where none exists then it will be the tenant’s responsibility to arrange and implement any work required in compliance with the procedure for Tenant Alterations.
Back gardens – dividing fences and rear fences	2m long x 1.8m (nominal) high close boarded timber privacy panel (usually adjoining house wall) with concrete posts, elsewhere to be continued with 1200mm high chain-link fence with concrete posts. <u>Note:</u> The provision of any more extensive close boarded fencing is a tenant responsibility and will only be replaced with the minimum standard of fencing as described.
Back garden boundaries adjoining public highway/footpath	Generally 1.8m (nominal) high close boarded timber fencing with concrete posts but may be 1m high to suit circumstances and adjoining boundary conditions.
Exceptional circumstances	In exceptional circumstances (e.g. where required for disability or specialist medical conditions) alternative fencing may be considered as required.
FOR COMMUNAL AREAS	
Parking areas & landscaped areas	600mm high knee-rail type fencing with timber or concrete posts and metal or timber rails to suit location.
Recycling areas	1.8m high hit and miss timber board fencing with concrete posts.
Drying areas	1.8m high hit and miss timber board fencing with concrete posts.
Alleys and public access passageways	1.8m high close boarded timber fencing with concrete posts.
Estate fencing – garage blocks	1.8m high close boarded timber fencing with concrete posts.
Boundary of Council land	Various

4. FENCING MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS

- 4.1. CCC has a standardised approach to the fencing specification that is used for different types of fencing work.
- 4.2. Fencing for both existing housing and new build housing is therefore be installed to the same specification.
- Fencing Posts - Concrete posts will be used to maximise the life of fencing and minimise future maintenance costs (timber fence posts generally have useful lifespan of only 7-10 years).
 - Where timber posts are used for exceptional fencing repairs then min 100 x100 mm tanalised (pre-treated) timber posts will be used.
 - Chain Link Fencing – This will replace the previous practice of delineating garden boundaries using simple post and 3 strands of wire which provides no security for animals or small children. Post and wire has proved unpopular with residents as a minimum standard so CCC will use pre-galvanised, plastic-coated chain link fencing as divisional fencing between gardens.
- 4.3. Consideration will be given to the use of modern materials, such as recycled synthetic (non-timber) long life fencing posts and panels, where it can be demonstrated that improvements in durability and value for money can be achieved.

5. FENCING DELIVERY

- 5.1. Planned replacement – Each year the available capital fencing budget will be allocated as follows:
- 50% to be spent on targeted “estate” projects identified from cyclical Planned Repairs estate surveys (seven-year cycle). Fencing identified and ordered in a planned way often represents better value for money than carrying out repairs in an ad-hoc responsive way.
 - 50% to be spent on individual jobs drawn from a “holding list” of replacement requests reported by residents or via the response repairs team.
- 5.2. Holding list – When fencing has reached the end of its life and can no longer be economically repaired, the replacement work will be added to a “holding list” and completed in order of priority subject to allocated funds as above.
- 5.3. Day to day repairs - Small fencing repairs will continue to be carried out as a part of the Council’s day to day response repairs service. However, this work has to be generally restricted to small repairs (not replacements) and includes attending to single broken fence posts, or urgent work to make

fences safe. Wherever possible, all non-urgent fencing repairs will be put into batches and ordered in a planned way from the “Holding List”.

- 5.4. Emergencies - If a fence blows down in the wind, or is vandalised, the Council will attend to make it safe either as an emergency or urgent response, within 24 hours or 3 days respectively depending upon actual circumstances, but full replacement may not take place at the same time. The work to replace the fence will generally be placed on the “holding list” for completion as above.
- 5.5. Disability adaptations - Facilitating access to and from gardens, or making access safe, for a disabled occupant is one of the eligible works under the Council’s [Policy on Adaptation’s for Disabled Tenants](#). This could include fencing works and would be carried out subject to an assessment from an Occupational Therapist.
- 5.6. Exceptional circumstances - There are sometimes exceptional circumstances that may affect the type of fencing that is installed. This could include requirements for additional security, anti-social behaviour, medical conditions, other social reasons. Sometimes the issues that make circumstances exceptional may be confidential in nature, and this sometimes leads to questions about fairness from neighbours. Decisions about exceptional circumstances will be referred to the Assets and Property Assistant Director.

Policy written: March 2022

Next review: March 2024

Appendix – Letter to Freeholder Template

Enquiries to:

Contact name (delete if directing to Customer Service)

Department (only what is relevant to customer)

T: 01223 [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

E: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) @cambridge.gov.uk

[Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Fence/boundary repair request

It has been brought to our attention that the fence/boundary situated between your property and [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) is [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

As the owner of the property, under the deed of covenant, you are liable for the maintenance and repair of the fence/boundary. Thus, may I please request that you resolve the issue.

If you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Appendix – Letter to Tenant Template

Enquiries to:

Contact name (delete if directing to Customer Service)

Department (only what is relevant to customer)

T: 01223 [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

E: [Click or tap here to enter text. @cambridge.gov.uk](#)

[Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Dear _____,

RE: Fence/boundary repair request

We have written to the freeholder concerning the fence/boundary situated between your property and [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) requesting that they resolve the issue.

As the fence/boundary is not Council owned any dispute is a civil matter and we cannot enforce any action.

Cambridge City Council is not responsible for maintaining, enforcing or repairing freeholders' boundaries and fences. However, if there is a health and safety issue then this matter can be referred to Environmental Health – env.health@cambridge.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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