



# RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

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## Graffiti and Street Art Policy

Raunds Town Council recognises the adverse impact that graffiti can have on public and visitor perception of our town.

The Council is committed to tackling unwanted, illegal and antisocial graffiti, whilst taking a balanced view on street art.

The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defines graffiti as “any informal or illegal marks, drawings or paintings that have been deliberately made by a person or persons on any physical element comprising the outdoor environment, with a view to communicating some message or symbol etc. to others”.

Graffiti, street art and fly-posting can have a detrimental impact on the local environment and people’s quality of life when it is offensive. According to DEFRA guidance, offensive graffiti applies where it is **racially offensive, hostile to a religious or belief group, sexually offensive, homophobic, depicts a sexual or violent act or is defamatory**.

### Graffiti Removal

The Town Council does not consent to any painting, writing, soiling, marking or other defacement on its property without its prior express permission being obtained. Where graffiti is found on Council-owned properties or street furniture the graffiti will be removed as soon as practicable.

The Council will aim to carry out the removal of graffiti deemed to be offensive within 24 hours of any sightings or reports, unless it falls on a weekend, in which case removal will take place on the next working day.

The ability to remove graffiti and the method used will be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking the health and safety of the operatives undertaking the work and the potential for damage to property into account.

If the graffiti is on property not owned by the Council the details of the graffiti and its location will be reported to the relevant authority. Private and public companies have a duty to remove graffiti from their own property, including utility companies such as;

British Telecom - green boxes and telephone boxes

Royal Mail - red post boxes

North Northamptonshire Council – traffic lights, lampposts, bollards, bus stops, bus shelters, road signage, public toilets, rubbish bins and street name plates.

North Northamptonshire Council can remove graffiti from property outside of its ownership. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the Authority to issue a ‘Graffiti Removal Notice’ to an owner requiring the owner to remove graffiti within a stipulated timescale which cannot be less than 28 days. Failure to comply with such a notice may result in the Council

carrying out and charging for works in default.

## **Preventing Graffiti**

The Council recognises the importance of engaging young people through ongoing education, including through schools and organised youth activities in areas where graffiti is identified as a problem.

The Council will also work in partnership with a range of other agencies and organisations to explore preventative measures and ideas.

## **Street Art**

The Council recognises that public opinion on what constitutes graffiti has changed, that some "Graffiti" is now considered to be "Street Art" and that some members of the community now consider that "Street Art" makes a positive contribution to the urban environment. Where street art enhances visitor engagement with the public realm, this is viewed by the Council as a positive attraction to the town.

In recognition of this, properly authorised and appropriate street art may be supported, subject to meeting the acceptance criteria within this policy and not being a detriment to local environmental quality.

Any individual that wishes to apply street art to Council property must inform the Council at the earliest opportunity. Where graffiti has already been applied to Council property, but the creator considers the graffiti to be street art, the creator must notify the Council that they would like the work to be kept.

Any decision not to remove the work will be based upon a test of whether the street art or graffiti are considered to be detrimental to the local environment and enjoyment of the location by users.

The list below highlights key considerations:

- Can the Graffiti/Street Art be seen from areas the public are entitled to frequent.
- Is the Graffiti/Street Art offensive in its nature, gang related, racially aggravating, insulting and against public interest.
- Are the images considered to be contextually detrimental, including but not limited to:
  - encouraging to illegal graffiti proliferation
  - inappropriateness for the location e.g. adult content near schools
  - out of keeping with surrounding area.
- Saturation (Consideration of the number of images already present in the area).
- Complaints
- Other policies likely to be infringed
- Explicit Images
- Intimidating
- Libellous or potentially libellous statements
- In a conservation area
- On a listed building
- Tags
- Scratching
- On Council property.

This list is not exhaustive and adequate exploration of the detriment question is critical to provide the Council with a clear considered rationale for any decision, especially where conflicting opinions between the community may exist. This is a matter of judgement for the Council, acting reasonably and having due regard to national guidance and to this policy.

There is no obligation on the Council to consult in connection with the exercise of its graffiti removal powers and in most cases it will not be in the public interest for it to do so.

### **Evaluating graffiti and street art**

There may be occasions when it is difficult to make a clear decision whether a piece is street art. In this situation, cases will be referred to Full Council. The Council will review each case, applying the policy criteria in order to reach agreement on whether a piece is removed or allowed to remain in place.

Evaluation by the Council will take place when complaints are received from the community.

The Council supports engagement with the artistic community, particularly through a co-ordinating single point of contact.

**Adopted March 2025. To be reviewed triennially.**