

## ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Estate Management describes Ayrshire Housing's role in contributing to the overall appearance and maintenance of our housing developments. This is not restricted to the physical environment but also includes issues related to the management of relevant and appropriate aspects of the tenancy agreement.

Housing Management and Housing Maintenance staff have a key role in carrying out estate management activities and duties and it is important that due diligence is taken to ensure that any apparent issues regarding estate and tenancy management are dealt with appropriately and timeously.

We also recognise that to achieve this, Estate Management is not simply about the physical environment of the estates, but also concerns issues such as identifying and assisting tenants access appropriate supports.

1.2 Through the Scottish Social Housing Charter the Scottish Housing Regulator has detailed a number of indicators relevant to estate management.

These are:

- Charter Outcome 6 - Estate Management – Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.
- Charter Outcome 13 – Value for Money – Social landlords manage all aspects of their business so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

1.3 There are clear links between this Policy and a number of other policies and activities, including the following:

- Antisocial Behaviour Policy;
- Allocation Policy;
- Void Management Policy;
- Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Asset Management Plan;
- Health and Safety Inspections e.g. common closes, communal lighting, play areas, lifts;
- Permissions policies and procedures;

- Planned Maintenance Programme;
- Landscaping contracts;
- Factoring Services to owners.

Our estate management responsibilities will also cover areas such as;

- Vandalism – ordering remedial works and taking follow-up action with e.g. the Police if appropriate.
- Repairs and Maintenance – being aware of and taking action to remove or address hazards e.g. broken fencing, uneven footpaths, leaking or overflowing gutters, etc.
- Condition of tenants' gardens – enforcing conditions of the tenancy.
- Fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti.
- Maintaining gardens in void properties if overgrown.
- Alterations and Permissions – erection of huts, garages and aerals etc.
- Abandoned Tenancies – awareness of signs of unoccupied properties, taking quick and effective investigatory action.

## 2. Objectives

2.1 A number of key objectives will underpin our approach to estate management.

We will:

- Aim to provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment for our residents.
- Encourage resident interest and participation in the upkeep of the estates.
- Aim to maximise residents' satisfaction with the services we provide.
- Ensure that tenants fulfil and comply with the conditions of their tenancy agreement particularly in relation to the satisfactory upkeep of their homes and the surrounding areas, including gardens and communal areas.
- Aim to create and support sustainable tenancies and communities.
- Meet our legal duties, obligations and responsibilities detailed in the tenancy agreement.
- To meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- Ensure that the common areas for which the association has responsibility are regularly checked and maintained to the highest possible standard.
- Check that any services that are charged to tenants and residents through rents and/or service charges or factoring charges e.g. close cleaning, window cleaning and grounds maintenance are being carried out to an acceptable standard.
- Work with other agencies and authorities to ensure our estate management objectives are met.
- React promptly in relation to estate management problems including complaints from tenants and/or residents, for example, about service quality or neglect by other tenants and/or residents.

### 3. Prevention and Action

- 3.1 At the pre-tenancy stage and at tenancy sign-up prospective tenants will be made aware of both their and the association's responsibilities and obligations with regards to estate and tenancy management which are detailed in the tenancy agreement. New tenants will also be provided with a copy of the Tenant Handbook that includes information summarising these responsibilities.

The association's tenancy agreement specifies tenants' responsibilities including:

- The tenant, the person living with the tenant or visitors must take reasonable care to prevent damage to their house, their neighbour's property and all common areas.
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent pets from causing a nuisance, annoyance or a detriment to health and safety or presenting a danger to anyone living with the tenant or the tenant's neighbours.
- Take reasonable care of gardens and common areas.
- Appropriate storage of belongings and parking of vehicles.
- Careful and appropriate disposal of refuse, including bulk refuse for uplifting.

A visit will be made to new tenants within six weeks of their tenancy starting. Any estate management related matters that have arisen in the first six weeks can be highlighted at this visit

- 3.2 In terms of specific estate management issues that arise, the association will take the following action:

- Stair cleaning - the association provides a stair cleaning service in a number of its flatted developments. However, it is also the responsibility of each resident to ensure that they maintain the standard between cleans to ensure that all residents are able to live in a safe, clean and tidy environment and that communal areas, stairs and closes are kept in a satisfactory condition.
- Gardens - tenants will be informed where the condition of their garden is unsatisfactory. Tenants will be reminded that it is a condition of their tenancy that gardens should be maintained to a satisfactory standard. In extreme cases, appropriate legal action will be taken to enforce the conditions of tenancy or seek recovery of possession.
- Abandoned Vehicles - where an abandoned vehicle is identified the Housing Officer will make initial enquiries with residents to identify the owner and arrange for its removal. If the owner of the vehicle is not identified the Housing Officer will liaise with the local authority who may serve an Abandoned Vehicle Notice and arrange for its removal.
- Fly tipping/Refuse Disposal/Litter - the association will ensure that guidance is given to residents concerning the disposal of household refuse and bulk items by the local authority. Ayrshire Housing may recharge tenants for the

removal of any waste item(s) disposed of other than by use of the bins provided or any bulk or other item(s) deposited anywhere, at any time, other than at the agreed collection point and date. The association takes a proactive approach to dealing with instances of fly tipping. Items left on association developments are uplifted as soon as possible in order to discourage further any fly tipping. Where there are regular issues, the association will work in conjunction with the relevant local authority to try and identify the household responsible and take steps to deal with their antisocial behaviour.

If there is a general litter problem in an area around our properties, the Housing Officer will report this to the relevant local authority service.

- Satellite Dishes – Ayrshire Housing will not permit individual satellite dishes to be erected on the front elevation of its property in accordance with local planning rules. Any satellite dish sited inappropriately will be removed and the costs recharged to the tenant or owner. Ayrshire Housing will, however, facilitate the installation of communal dishes or cable systems whenever possible.
- Pest Control – Ayrshire Housing will respond to cases of vermin and pest infestation within its stock in a prompt and appropriate manner. Infestations or pests in tenants' homes are the responsibility of the tenant and treatment should be arranged and paid for by the tenant. Advice is provided to tenants on dealing with pest infestations, including the contact details for local authority departments with responsibility for pest control, normally the Environmental Health Department. The association will treat infestations or pests found in communal areas.
- Pets – Ayrshire Housing will deal with pet issues where the animal is causing a nuisance either within the house or common property.
- Security - the association will liaise, if required, with the appropriate authorities to ensure that street and communal lighting is maintained and in good working order.
- Vandalism – Ayrshire Housing will take firm action against residents who are found to be responsible for vandalism within the house, common close or common areas of any property where Ayrshire Housing has responsibility.

Where Ayrshire Housing has proof, repairs resulting from acts of vandalism will be recharged to the tenant. Depending on the location, frequency and seriousness of the vandalism the Housing Officer will report the incidents to the Police or advise tenants to report incidents promptly direct to the Police.

- Play areas – the association will ensure that any play areas for which they are responsible are kept in a safe condition and will ensure that regular inspections are carried out to identify any damage and remove any identified

hazards as soon as possible. Tenants and/or other residents whose children are using the play areas will be advised that any damage caused to equipment due to neglect or misuse will be recharged to the tenant/resident.

- Graffiti – we will aim to remove graffiti within one working day if offensive or three working days if not offensive.
- Drug Related Issues – Ayrshire Housing will instruct contractors to remove discarded needles and syringes within one working day.

3.4 When a tenancy has ended or been established to have been abandoned, the Maintenance Officer will inspect the house, including gardens, where appropriate, and will arrange to charge the outgoing tenant for any repairs or removal of abandoned possessions, for example left in garden areas. Dilapidated huts or other outbuildings will be removed. Broken fencing will either be removed, renewed or made safe.

#### **4. Estate Inspections**

4.1 Housing and Maintenance Officers have a joint responsibility for estate management and should each be paying due attention to the estate related aspects detailed above. A visual inspection should be routinely done at all visits. This inspection should pick up issues relating to matters including litter, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, damaged fencing, footpaths, etc. Any apparent issues should be dealt with appropriately and timeously.

A formal estate “walkabout” should be carried out in every estate on at least a two yearly basis though most estates will be visited annually. A record of this inspection should be retained and feedback detailing the outcomes and any action to be taken provided to tenants following the inspection.

Any such actions required e.g. letters to tenants regarding unsatisfactory gardens or maintenance works deemed necessary should be taken without undue delay.

Tenants who have their own gardens will normally be responsible for maintaining them. However, if a tenant qualifies, e.g. due to age and/or infirmity, they may receive help from Ayrshire Housing’s Garden Maintenance scheme.

4.2 Common area landscape maintenance is managed by the Maintenance department and carried out by an external contractor. The areas are regularly inspected to ensure that the maintenance work is carried out to a satisfactory standard and provides value for money. Regular contract monitoring meetings are held between the association and the contractor.

#### **5. Permissions**

5.1 Permission must be requested and granted prior to tenants undertaking any of the following:

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Reviewed: June 2012, June 2019 (approved at Board meeting)

Current to: June 2024

- Installation of Satellite dishes or aerials;
- Erection of garden huts or other outbuildings;
- Painting of external doors or windows;
- Erecting fences;
- Formation of a driveway;
- Keeping domestic animals (pets).

Permission will not be unreasonably withheld though conditions may be applied where permission is granted e.g. size and location of huts, positioning of satellite dishes and aerials.

Further information regarding the above can be found in the association's Permissions Policy.

## **6. Tenant Participation in Estate Management activities**

- 6.1 Tenants will be encouraged to participate in Estate Visits/Inspections.
- 6.2 The association will hold annual pet and garden competitions to encourage tenants to take pride in their homes and make a positive impact on their estate. These competitions will be highlighted at the association's Annual General Meeting.
- 6.3 Estate based project budgets will be introduced and tenants will be encouraged to identify or suggest possible improvement or enhancement works which could be considered for funding from this budget. Projects would have to meet specific criteria such as improving the environment within the estate, improving security within the estate and must generally benefit Ayrshire Housing tenants living within the estate. Works to communal or common areas could include fencing, improved security lighting, landscaping and improvements to common areas and parking area improvements

## **7. Factoring Services**

- 7.1 In a number of estates the association provides a management service on behalf of all the owners, including the properties still owned in each estate by the association. Services vary from estate to estate but generally include grass cutting, hedge, shrub and woodland maintenance, weed control and litter picking. A charge is raised annually against each owner and covers the association's costs in providing these services.

## **8. Monitoring**

- 8.1 A general report will be provided to the association's Board annually detailing activities such as New Tenant Visits, Estate Inspections, Tenant Participation in Pet and Garden Competitions and support for local community based events.

8.2 The association will survey and report on tenants and owners' satisfaction levels with the management of their estate in accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

9.1 Ayrshire Housing is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In delivering this policy, Ayrshire Housing's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the association's Equality and Human Rights Policy.

## **10. Complaints**

10.1 Any individual who is dissatisfied with the service experienced should be encouraged to provide feedback. Complaints regarding the implementation of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the association's corporate Customer Complaints Policy and associated procedures.