



## ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

<b>POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST</b>	
Policy Guardian:	Area Director
Author:	Area Housing Manager
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Equality Impact Assessment required:	
Data Protection compliant:	Yes
Health & Safety compliant:	Yes
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QL system changes made:	
KPIs / reporting arrangements implemented:	In place
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This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages

# CORDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## POLICY STATEMENT: ESTATE MANAGEMENT

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Association recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of the environmental management role of the landlord and an important service for tenants and other residents. Cordale Housing Association's Estate Management Policy demonstrates our commitment to tenants, and others whom we provide services to, that looking after our local environment is important in order to create and sustain desirable neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 Our local environment has a major impact on the quality of resident's lives and the enjoyment residents take from living safely in their own homes. This policy aims to show how we work with tenants and owners as partners to maintain and improve the properties and environments we manage, including landscapes and common areas to the very highest standards.
- 1.3 The policy addresses specific issues that we know are important to tenants and residents, like graffiti, litter, vandalism and other crime. Working with the police and public service partners, we are committed to taking preventive action and to acting quickly and effectively when problems happen.
- 1.4 Cordale Housing Association is committed to achieving this outcome and to fulfilling our vision of *"homes and services that make life better"*.
- 1.5 Estate management refers to the management of; our neighbourhood; our property and properties where we have a management arrangement in place; the surrounding areas and other services which are aimed at enabling our tenants and residents to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes and; a decent, safe and secure living environment.
- 1.6 Estate Management encompasses a diverse range of issues such as: providing advice and assistance on tenancy matters and services; enforcing tenancy conditions; the management of communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership; and the management and upkeep of the physical environment in the Association's ownership. The Association will consider activities which will enhance the local community including initiatives which may reduce crime and improve the local environment.
- 1.7 The Estate Management Policy applies to all properties owned by the Association or managed by the Association as Factor.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

2.1 The aims of the Association's Estate management Policy is to ensure that:

- Tenants and factored owners live in well managed and maintained estates providing a decent, secure, safe, clean and tidy environment,
- Tenants and factored owners are made aware of, and accept, their responsibilities in relation to the upkeep of their property and surrounding environment,
- Tenants and factored owners are made aware of the Association's responsibilities in relation to Estate Management,
- Tenants and factored owners are satisfied with the Estate Management service provided by the Association,
- We provide opportunities for tenants and factored owners to feedback their satisfaction levels in order to influence and participate in decision making relating to estate management,
- The upkeep of the housing stock and surrounding environment are managed and maintained to a standard which reduces the duration and level of void properties.

2.2 To achieve the above objectives the Association will;

- Work closely with tenants and factored owners, regarding the quality of estate management services provided,
- Closely monitor the performance of contractors and the Estates Services regarding the upkeep of all common areas,
- Carry out suitable surveys on the quality of all estate management services,
- Take every opportunity to encourage tenants and factored owners to contribute to estate management by participating in estate inspections or specific location inspections,
- Involve tenants and factored owners in developing initiatives for the improvement of their local environment and amenities,
- Keep tenants and factored owners informed about activities affecting their environment,
- Provide good quality information and advice on estate management services, including at the tenancy sign-up stage, new tenant visits, office enquiries, information leaflets, newsletter articles and customer service standards,
- Carry out regular inspections of our neighbourhoods and common areas including property inspections,
- Make the most effective use of internal recording systems including IT systems, email and standard pro-formas,
- Ensure staff maintain a visible presence throughout the Association's neighbourhood,
- Be proactive and take appropriate and early action to enforce tenancy conditions or title deeds where applicable,
- Work closely with other agencies and statutory bodies with the aim of ensuring that the Association's neighbourhoods and surrounding environment are well looked after,

- Ensure good relationships are developed with tenants, and factored owners to encourage and promote interest and involvement within their area for the mutual benefit of both the Association and the local community.
- Encourage feedback on services and publish findings from surveys and visits.

### **3. Legislation & Regulatory Framework**

- 3.1 The Estate Management Policy meets with legislative and good practice requirements including:

**The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST)** – the Association can exercise direct control over its tenants via the terms of the SST and the tenancy conditions. The purpose of this is to protect the interest of tenants, the wider community and the Association.

- 3.2 **The Scottish Social Housing Charter** – the Scottish Government, through the Social Housing Charter, sets out the outcomes it expects Housing Associations to achieve for its residents. In terms of how Associations manage their estates and neighborhoods. The Charter states that:

#### **Outcome 6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes**

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

- Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

- 3.3 The Estate Management policy supports the strategic requirements of the Association's Business Plan and links to the Association's Tenant Participation Strategy, Void Management Policy, anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy and Risk Management Strategy.

### **4. Policy and Procedures**

- 4.1 The Estate Management Policy is supported by the following activities and procedures which include the following guidance for staff and information for residents. To ensure that the Association delivers on the Estate Management Policy's aims and objectives and for absolute clarity in terms of service delivery the following policy statements will apply:

- **Provision of quality information and advice;**  
The Association will provide information to tenants and factored owners the estate management services they can expect via the Tenancy agreement or service agreement. We will publish articles in the Associations newsletters, placing information on our website

and through face to face contact with residents at tenancy sign ups, new tenant home visits, office interviews and letters requiring follow-up action following estate inspections.

- **Roles and responsibilities of Association staff:**

All Association staff have a shared responsibility for looking after the Association's neighbourhood and properties by reporting anything they see which causes concern. Housing and Maintenance Officers will be primarily responsible for responding to and dealing with estate management matters, however, other staff will support this policy objective throughout the course of their work by highlighting any matters of concern they identify.
- **Frequency of estate management visits by staff:**

The Housing and Maintenance staff team will be in the neighbourhood on a regular basis whilst undertaking home visits for tenancy matters, repair inspections, tenant meetings, tenant interviews and planned estate inspections.
- **New tenant visits:**

The Housing Officer will visit all new tenants within two months of commencement of their tenancy. The purpose of the visit being to ensure that the tenant has made a satisfactory start to their tenancy and that the tenancy conditions are being complied with.
- **House inspections:**

The Housing and Maintenance Officers will undertake house inspections in response to reports that the tenancy conditions are not being maintained. The Officers will also observe compliance with the tenancy conditions when undertaking ad hoc visits to houses.
- **Close meetings and resident meetings:**

The Housing Officers and appropriate staff will organise close meetings or resident meetings as required to address any estate management concerns which may arise and a meeting is helpful and practical. The Housing, Maintenance and/or relevant staff will attend the meetings as required. The Association may invite partner agencies which are relevant to the issues in hand in order to provide a joined up approach to solutions.
- **Estate inspections:**

The Housing Officer and Maintenance Officer will organise and attend pre-arranged estate inspections in line with any arrangements and timescales which are in place. Staff will arrange estate and property inspections of factored properties. Residents will be advised in advance and will be invited to participate in the inspection when appropriate and reasonable to do so. Issues arising and actions required will be recorded. Residents can provide feedback via on-line survey monkey surveys available on our web-site or in printed format as required.
- **Monitoring Standards:**

Where services are in place for the cleaning of communal areas, windows, communal landscape maintenance and the general environment, staff will monitor the terms of the contract and the quality of the service provided. The Housing and Maintenance

Officer will regularly inspect these areas to ensure that services are being provided as planned and are satisfactory. The Officer will take responsibility for taking forward actions to resolve concerns about performance or poor standards.

- **Upkeep of gardens areas:**

Residents who have gardens are responsible for maintaining them and keeping them tidy. The Housing Officer will ensure that tenancy conditions are maintained and that agreed action required to resolve issues is taken promptly. On occasions where it is proving difficult for a tenant to meet their responsibilities regarding their requirements to cut their grass and staff have intervened unsuccessfully, the Association will instruct contractors to cut the grass and the subsequent costs will be re-charged to the tenant.

- **Care of Garden Maintenance Scheme:**

The Association recognise that some tenants who become elderly, frail or disabled can at times have difficulty managing their tenancy responsibilities relating to keeping their garden maintained and have no able bodied household members who can assist in fulfilling this tenancy condition. In certain circumstances, the Association will provide our Care of Garden Maintenance service whereby the Associations contractor will cut and maintain the grass cutting requirements during the growing season. This service will be reviewed on an annual basis and applications for this service will be reviewed annually to ensure that those in need benefit.

- **Keeping pets:**

Tenant who wish to keep pets can only do so if the terms of their Tenancy Agreement permits them to do so. In addition to permissions, tenants must adhere to the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement for the keeping of, and control of pets. The Association will address dog fouling by working with residents, the local authority and the use of marketing tools.

- **Car parking:**

Where car parking is provided by the Association, this is available to our residents on a "first come, first served" basis. The Association will consider the provision of a parking bay for use by disabled badge owners provided that the request is made in writing, that there is sufficient space for the bay and the provision is supported by a majority of the residents. This only applies where the Association own the land, other requests should be directed to the Local Authority.

Where roads have been adopted by the Local Authority, West Dunbartonshire Council and Police Scotland will have the responsibility for implementing any parking restrictions or road traffic legislation and management. The Council will also be responsible for the repairs and maintenance of these adopted roads. Where the Association own the land which roads or parking is located, the Association will retain management responsibility in line with the conditions set out in tenancy agreements or deeds.

- **Abandoned vehicles:**

The Housing Officer will investigate reports of any abandoned vehicle on the Associations' property or land. Steps will be taken to

identify and contact the owner of the vehicle and request its removal. The abandoned vehicle will be reported to the Local Authority abandoned vehicle team who will put into action their procedures for identification and removal.

- **Vermin and other infestations:**

Where vermin or infestation is reported and found in common areas, the Maintenance Officer will arrange appropriate contractors to undertake remedial works. The Housing Officer will take responsibility for resolving an issue directly attributable to a tenant's living conditions or habits. This may involve other agencies (social work, GP, etc.) and actions to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions. Where the source of the infestation is related to a non-tenant, the Association will liaise with the local environmental health team.

- **Feeding birds:**

Residents should only feed birds using appropriate bird seed feeders or tables; ground feeding will not be permitted. The Housing Officer will investigate reports of noncompliance with the tenancy conditions.

- **Condition of bin store areas:**

Residents are responsible for ensuring that their bin store areas are kept clean and tidy and free from any refuse or other items. The Association will arrange for certain bin store areas to be swept and washed down when required to keep them safe. The Housing Officer will regularly check the condition of the bin stores and will investigate reports of non-compliance with the tenancy conditions.

- **Dealing with dumping of large items:**

Where large items (furniture, boxes, white goods etc.) are left in or near bin stores, in communal areas or in stairwells the Housing Officer will investigate and seek to identify the household responsible and secure removal under the terms of the tenancy conditions. The items will be removed if ownership cannot be identified and a charge will be applied proportionately to the block management costs. The Association's priority under these circumstances will be to ensure that bin stores, communal areas and stairwells are kept safe and free from fire hazards.

- **Dealing with graffiti:**

Where walls, doors and other communal areas are defaced by graffiti, the Maintenance Officer will arrange to have it removed and in particular the swift removal of graffiti of a racist or offensive nature.

- **Hazardous materials:**

The Housing and Maintenance Officer will arrange for a suitable contractor to remove any hazardous items, such as used syringes and needles or any other type of dangerous material. The Housing Officer will take responsibility for resolving an issue directly attributable to a tenant's living conditions or habits. This may involve other agencies (social work, GP, etc.) and actions to ensure compliance with the tenancy conditions.

- **Motability scooters or buggies:**

The Association will permit residents to keep a motability scooter or buggy provided that they have obtained our written permission in advance and that the scooter or buggy can be stored within the residents' home and that it meets a specified criteria. The Association will not permit the storage of scooters or buggies in communal areas or stairwells that are not designed or designated for such storage.

The Housing Officer is responsible for considering requests to store a scooter or buggy and for investigating issues of non-compliance.

- **Involving other agencies:**

Where the Association cannot solve or is not responsible for solving an estate management issue, the Housing and Maintenance Officers will liaise with, and request assistance from, other agencies, such as environmental health, the Police, social work and local councils. The Association will remain proactive in working to improve the conditions on its estates and in its neighbourhoods.

- **Children's Play and Recreation areas:**

The Association have a number of play and recreation areas within our neighbourhood for the benefit and wellbeing of our community. The Association will insure, maintain, inspect these areas regularly and take the appropriate action to address any issues which arise.

4.2 The Association will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and support in order to meet the requirements of this policy and related procedures.

## **5. Equal Opportunities Implications**

5.1 The Association will ensure the promotion of equal opportunities by publishing information in different languages and other formats such as large print, tape and Braille, as required.

5.2 The Association will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs, or opinions, such as religious or political beliefs.

5.3 All communication with tenants or other customers will be in 'plain language' and it will be made clear who the most appropriate person is to contact in the event of a query. The Association will make appropriate arrangements for communicating with tenants and other customers who have special needs such as people with sight, hearing or learning difficulties, for example by using signers.

## **6. Sustainability Implications**

6.1 This policy has no direct sustainability implications.

## **7. Risk Management**

7.1 The Management Committee will consider the risk management factors of Estate Management including:

- Non-compliance with outcomes from the Social Housing Charter,
- The potential harm to the Association's reputation as a provider of quality housing developments as a consequence of the poor application of this policy.

## **8. Tenant Participation**

8.1 The Association has consulted with tenants, factored owners and staff when formulating the Estate Management Policy in accordance with the regulatory and legislative requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and of the Social Housing Charter, Outcome 3: Tenant Participation. Consultation was conducted through the use of the Associations Newsletter.

8.2 Estate Management is an area of our work where partnership with tenants, and factored owners has the potential to extend resident involvement and to encourage tenants and factored owners to take part in this and other aspects of the Association's work.

## **9. Complaints Procedure**

9.1 Any tenant or factored owner may submit a complaint, using the Association's complaints procedure if it is felt that the Association has failed not to correctly apply the Estate Management policy.

## **10. Performance Monitoring**

10.1 The Area Director will have overall responsibility for monitoring the standards covering this policy. The Association will have regard for feedback provided by stakeholders from estate walkabout inspections, residents meetings, office interviews, estate visits and complaints.

10.2 The Association will also conduct regular surveys of residents in receipt of our estates management services and will develop performance monitoring systems to report to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the following Social Housing Charter performance indicator:

**Indicator 17:** Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

## **11. Policy Review**

11.1 The Association will carry out a further review of the Estate Management Policy in 2021. Amendments may be made as required following consultation with service users and other agencies.