

# Estate Management Policy



## Document Control

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Associated Documents Considered	Yes	✓	No	

## **1. Scope of the Policy**

- 1.1. Estate Management within this policy is concerned with maintaining the physical condition, cleanliness and safety of the housing environment in which we operate in order to preserve its fabric and to promote community self-esteem.
- 1.2. The operational aspects of this policy relate to Waverley Housing's responsibility to inspect and maintain, common areas of its housing, the environment surrounding its houses and any other areas of land it owns. This policy also relates to the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes which encourages Registered Social Landlords to take steps to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.
- 1.3. For customers of all tenures, the operation of this policy means compliance with their obligations for keeping in good order the environment to their home over and above their own individual property and their duty to respect the needs, interests and wishes of the surrounding community.
- 1.4. Waverley Housing also recognises that problems will arise from time to time which may cause concern to tenants or friction between them. In order to minimise such problems emphasis will be placed on preventative measures, and procedures will be designed to resolve issues at an early stage.
- 1.5. This policy will be complemented by Waverley Housing's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy which deals with neighbour complaints and disputes as well as anti-social behaviour.

## **2. Policy**

- 2.1 Waverley Housing believes that all of its tenants have a right to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes in a safe and pleasant environment. Practices and procedures will be put in place for the proper management of our estates to ensure, as much as is within the control of Waverley Housing, the health, safety and well-being of the tenants and that the environment in which they live is pleasant and peaceful.
- 2.2. Waverley Housing aims to ensure that in the implementation of this policy no individual or group is treated unfairly or discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, marriage and civil partnership, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or pregnancy and maternity.
- 2.3. Waverley Housing will ensure that estate management services are effectively planned budgeted for and that sufficient staff resources are provided to ensure that estates are managed to a high standard.

## **3. Objectives of the Policy**

- 3.1. The aims and objectives of this Estate Management Policy are to:
  - a) enable tenants and their household to live in well managed and well maintained housing with an environment that is attractive, safe and secure, free from nuisance, annoyance, intimidation and harassment, in which people will want to live.

- b) ensure that tenants are aware of, and accept, their responsibilities regarding the upkeep of their homes and the surrounding area.
- c) ensure any enforcement action is lawful, consistent with the tenancy agreement and in line with good practice.
- d) promote partnership working with all the appropriate external agencies to develop and sustain safe and secure environments and to make the estates on which Waverley Housing has properties places where people want to live.
- e) contribute to developing sustainable communities which are popular and well-kept in which void levels are low and, in conjunction with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, crime and nuisance is kept to a minimum.
- f) ensure that our tenants are aware of Waverley Housing's commitment to and responsibility for good estate management through the consultation and participation process.

#### **4. Implementation of the Policy**

- 4.1. Waverley Housing will ensure that Housing Officers and/or other staff regularly visit estates and will be pro-active in dealing with tenancy issues particularly where there is a potential or alleged breach of tenancy conditions.
- 4.2. Estate management plans will be put in place to identify specific estate matters for inspection and will include a frequency of estate inspection relevant to specific estate management matters.
- 4.3. A programme of estate walkabouts will be carried out each year to identify any potential issues on estates caused through vandalism and accidental or wilful damage to any of Waverley Housing's property, communal areas, footpaths, boundary walls or fences, and open spaces. Issues arising from these walkabouts will be addressed by the relevant staff or forwarded to the appropriate agencies for their attention.
- 4.4. The standard of work carried out by our Estates Team and grounds maintenance contractors will also be assessed during visits to areas in which Waverley properties are located.
- 4.5. Waverley Housing will set targets to minimise void properties and will produce procedures designed to turnaround properties with minimum delay. In the case of unlettable voids or unoccupied properties routine garden maintenance will be carried out and vacant properties will be monitored in accordance with insurance requirements.
- 4.6. All properties and associated common areas are inspected prior to allocation and any repairs or other works necessary to bring the property up to Waverley Housing's re-let standard are carried out prior to the property being occupied or otherwise by mutual agreement.
- 4.7. The use of security screens and doors, on void properties, will be avoided where possible as we believe that the use of such measures affects the appearance of estates, attracts undue attention and can have an adverse effect on levels of demand.
- 4.8. All tenants will be made aware of the terms of their tenancy agreement, along with their rights and responsibilities of being a tenant, during accompanied viewings, tenancy sign-up and post allocation settling in visits.

- 4.9. Waverley Housing will make available to all tenants a handbook which will give practical guidance on both the landlords and tenants obligations as well as useful information on safety and security in the home as well as how to be a good neighbour.
- 4.10. All new tenants will receive a settling in visit within six weeks of their taking up a tenancy. The purpose of this visit will be to further explain obligations as a tenant and to discuss any issues the tenant wishes to raise with regard to the tenancy, features of the house and the location in which they live, as well as to gauge satisfaction with the allocations process.

## **5. Garden Ground**

- 5.1. Houses with gardens will be let on the basis that the tenant is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the garden. The condition of gardens will be monitored during estate visits and where found to be in an unacceptable condition the tenant will receive warning letters and/or visiting card for their action. Failure to respond to warning letters or visiting cards will result in Waverley Housing taking action to tidy the garden, with the cost of doing so, and any associated cost, being billed to the tenant. Continued failure to meet the obligations of maintaining the garden may result in action being taken against the tenant for breach of tenancy conditions.
- 5.2. In cases where the tenant is elderly or physically disabled Waverley Housing may offer a gardening service, subject to certain conditions, to assist such tenants in complying with their tenancy obligations. We will also consider, within the context of our Allocations Policy, offering tenants the opportunity to transfer to a house without a garden.
- 5.3. Garden ground shall not be used for any other purpose other than that intended. Tenants shall not be allowed to erect any structure or keep or park any vehicles, caravans or trailers on ground designated as garden ground without the express and written approval of Waverley Housing.

## **6. Vehicle**

- 6.1. Vehicles must not be parked within the boundaries of the property unless on an approved driveway or parking area and where so parked must be limited to two in number. Vehicles must not be parked on open spaces, grassed areas, footpaths or pavements.
- 6.2. Caravans must be parked in suitable areas and are not permitted to be parked on areas designated solely for the parking of motor vehicles; or within the boundaries of the property, which includes garden ground, driveways, etc.; or on any open spaces, grassed areas, footpaths or pavements.
- 6.3. Tenants are not permitted to remove walls, fencing, hedging etc. or otherwise alter the garden area for the purpose of parking any vehicle or for any other reason without our express permission. Where permission is granted any such driveway must comply with all planning regulations, building regulations and must meet the requirements of the local authority roads department. The tenant will be liable for all costs associated with such work.
- 6.4. Waverley Housing will order the re-instatement of any unauthorised driveways and the tenant shall be liable for all costs associated with reinstatement.
- 6.5. Tenants, members of the tenant's household or any visitor to the household must only park vehicles in suitable areas and they must not be parked on garden ground, drying greens, open spaces, footpaths or pavements

- 6.6. Efforts will be made to contact the owners of abandoned vehicles left on ground owned by Waverley to seek removal of such vehicles. If the owner fails to remove the vehicle Waverley may take the vehicle into storage and subsequently dispose of it. Costs incurred in this connection may be recharged to the owner.
- 6.7. Where car parking is provided it is made available on a first come first served basis and tenants will not be able to reserve car parking spaces for their sole use. The exception to this is where a disabled car parking space has been created for use by a person holding the appropriate Blue Badge parking permit.

## **7. Common Areas**

- 7.1 Unless provided as part of a service charge arrangement tenants occupying common closes will be required to sweep and clean these areas by rotation or agreed rota on a weekly basis. To ensure tenants comply with their obligations inspections will be made during estate visits by Housing Officers. Where tenants fail to meet this obligation warning letters and/or visiting cards will be issued. Failure to respond to warning letters will result in Waverley Housing taking action to clean the common area, with the cost of doing so, and any associated cost, being billed in equal shares to each of the tenants within the common close. Continued failure to meet the obligations of cleaning the common areas may result in action being taken against the tenant for breach of tenancy conditions.
- 7.2. For the safety and convenience of others, tenants are not allowed to store any items such as furniture, bicycles, rubbish bags etc. in closes or stairwells or stair landings. Where tenants fail to observe this, warning letters and/or visiting cards will be issued requesting removal of the item. Failure to comply with the request may result in Waverley Housing removing the item and billing the cost, plus any associated costs, to the tenant or tenants responsible.
- 7.3. Some blocks of flats may be provided with secure door entry systems. Where so provided they are for the safety and security of the tenants living in those blocks and the doors must be kept secure at all times.
- 7.4. Where pests or infestation is reported in common areas appropriate remedial action will be taken by our Estates Team or contractors. Our staff who have been trained in the safe removal of sharps will remove these from common areas.

## **8. Open Spaces**

- 8.1. Waverley Housing will, where appropriate, in conjunction with other owners and in accordance with the Abolition of Feudal Tenure (Scotland) Act 2000 and Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004, carry out maintenance to common parts and open spaces in order that the said common parts and open spaces are fit for use by the tenant and other occupiers.
- 8.2. Many of Waverley Housing's estates are multi-tenured and often responsibility for repairs, maintenance and cleanliness of common areas may be shared between Waverley Housing and other owners. In such circumstances Waverley Housing may consult and/or liaise with other owners in respect of any estate management issues as may be required.
- 8.3 Waverley Housing has a considerable number of properties situated on estates owned and/or managed by other housing organisations. In such circumstances we will liaise closely

with the owners of these estates to ensure that our tenants on those estates are catered for within the terms of this policy.

- 8.4. Waverley is not responsible for the provision of a snow and ice clearing service but will liaise with the local authority to ensure adequate grit bins are provided.

## **9. Vandalism**

- 9.1. Waverley Housing will report all acts of vandalism to our property or common areas we own to the police. Tenants are encouraged to report all incidents of vandalism to the local police immediately upon becoming aware of the incident.
- 9.2. Where the identity of a perpetrator of acts of vandalism, to Waverley Housing's property, is a known member of a tenant's household, or visitor to a tenant's household, then Waverley Housing will require the costs of rectifying the damage, and any associated costs, to be met by the tenant concerned unless otherwise recovered by an order of the Court.
- 9.3. Where a repair which would otherwise be rechargeable to a tenant has been caused as an act of vandalism, e.g. a broken window, it must be reported to the police by the tenant within 24 hours of the incident occurring. The tenant must notify Waverley of the incident number when reporting the repair.
- 9.4. Where incidents of vandalism are recurrent the Company will liaise with the police to consider appropriate action to minimise and ultimately stop the vandalism.

## **10. Graffiti**

- 10.1. Waverley Housing will take early action to remove any graffiti which is brought to our attention and for which we have direct responsibility.
- 10.2. In areas where Waverley Housing has tenants but has no direct control over the estate we will liaise with the local authority, other landlords, owners and/or other agencies to ensure that early action is taken to remove graffiti.

## **11. Keeping of animals**

- 11.1. Tenants are not permitted to erect any huts, hutches, aviaries, cages or kennels, for keeping pets, in any garden ground or other ground owned by the company without our express approval in writing.
- 11.2. The keeping of animals by tenants is only permitted in accordance with Waverley Housing's policy on keeping pets. (See separate policy).
- 11.3. Where tenants are given permission to keep pets it will be conditional upon the pet being kept under proper control, and not causing nuisance, excessive noise or danger to any other person.
- 11.4. Tenants will be responsible for the removal of any fouling caused by their pet. Failure to do so may result in permission to keep a pet being revoked; or action being taken against them for breach of tenancy; or being referred to the prosecuting authority where appropriate.
- 11.5. The keeping of pigeons or erection of pigeon lofts is not permitted.

## **12. Satellite Dishes and TV Aerials**

12.1. Tenants must seek Waverley Housing's permission for the installation of satellite dishes and TV aerials. Such permission shall not unreasonably be withheld. Where permission is granted it will be solely at the discretion of Waverley Housing and conditional upon the tenant being responsible for any damage caused to our property and/or the property of others through the dish or aerial being installed, dismantled or becoming dislodged.

## **13. CCTV**

13.1. It is recognised that on occasion some tenants may wish to install CCTV systems at their home, generally due to concerns about anti-social behaviour. However, it is also recognised that such CCTV systems can cause concern to neighbours who may feel their privacy is being compromised.

13.2. Waverley Housing will treat requests from tenants to install CCTV systems on a case by case basis although generally if the system would record images out with the curtilage of the property then permission will not be granted. As long as images recorded are solely within the curtilage of the property GDPR nor DPA requirements will apply.

13.3. Where such requests are received the following areas will be considered:

- a) The reasons for the request
- b) Have neighbours been consulted about the request
- c) Is there an alternative means of dealing with the concerns of the tenant seeking to install the CCTV system
- d) The tenant will be responsible for all installation and operating costs of the CCTV system
- e) The tenant will be responsible for all images recorded
- f) The CCTV system must not be used for any other purpose than protecting their property
- g) The Company reserves the right to check the operation of the CCTV system
- h) The Company reserves the right to withdraw permission and seek the removal of the CCTV system

13.4. The tenant must not install any CCTV system until they receive written permission from the Company.

## **14. Garden Sheds, Greenhouses Etc.**

14.1. Tenants are not permitted to erect garden sheds, greenhouses, garages, fencing, decking or any other structure without our express approval in writing. Such permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Where planning permission may also be required then our permission will be conditional upon planning consent having been obtained. Where so required tenants shall be responsible for the submission of the planning application and any costs associated with it.

14.2. Where a structure, such as set out in 13.1 above, has been erected with permission and has since become dilapidated Waverley Housing may request that the condition is brought up to an appropriate standard, failing which an order for its removal will be given in writing. Failure to comply with such a request will result in Waverley Housing taking steps to remove it and billing the tenant the cost of removal, plus any associated costs.

## **15. Neighbour Disputes**

- 15.1. The Company recognises that disputes between tenants or between tenants and owners may arise from time to time as a result of differing lifestyles, definitions of acceptable behaviour, cleanliness etc. In such cases tenants will in the first instance be encouraged to resolve difficulties with their neighbours on an amicable basis.
- 15.2. Where disputes cannot be resolved without intervention Waverley Housing may, with the approval of the parties concerned, refer the matter for mediation to Scottish Borders Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
- 15.3. Serious and persistent behaviour of an anti-social nature will be dealt with in accordance with Waverley Housing's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Where the issue of a formal warning has had no effect Waverley Housing may seek an Anti-Social Behaviour Order against the tenant or alternatively may instigate legal proceedings. Such proceedings may take the form of an interdict or action to repossess the property as appropriate.

## **16. Community Involvement**

- 16.1. Waverley Housing aims to foster a positive community image through consultation with tenants, owner-occupiers and tenant and/or resident groups on all matters that affect them which are relevant to the estates in which they live. We will also support community activities from time to time through sponsorship within available resources and will promote specific activities such as garden competitions, estate clean ups etc.
- 16.2. Waverley Housing will liaise, where appropriate, with Scottish Borders Council's Neighbourhood Operations Team over issues such as littering, fly tipping, dog fouling and graffiti which fall within the remit of the Team.

## **17. Reporting & Monitoring**

- 17.1. Waverley Housing's housing management staff will maintain appropriate estate management records and quarterly estate management reports will be prepared for the Board detailing any serious complaints received, actions taken and areas of concern relating to the upkeep of estates.
- 17.2. Estate management issues will be monitored to identify the volume and nature of estate issues, whether any are recurring and the outcome of action taken.

## **18. Complaints**

- 18.1. Tenants will be given clear advice on how to make a complaint or a service request about any matter covered in this policy. All complaints or service requests will be recorded, noted and dealt with as required.
- 18.2. Where tenants wish to make a complaint regarding service failure in respect of this policy they may do so in accordance with Waverley Housing's Complaints Policy.

## **19. Review Process**



19.1. This policy will be reviewed every five years, or earlier, where a change in relevant legislation arises. Where any conflict arises at any point in time between policy, any appropriate legislation, statute or Government guidance, the policy shall be subordinate.