

Governance: Housing Management

Code: HM 07

Approval: July 2007

Review Date: July 2012

Cross Reference: Abandoned Vehicles HM 01
Abandonments HM 02
Allocations HM 03
Anti-Social HM 04
Harassment HM 09
Pets Policy HM 13
Gardens Alterations and
Improvements HM 18
Tenant Participation HM22
Tenants Handbook

Guidance: Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Forth's Scottish Secure Tenancy
Agreement

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Forth Housing Association recognises that Estate Management is a vital part of the housing management role of the landlord and a particularly important service from the tenants and residents viewpoint. The purpose of the Estate Management Policy is to ensure a common and consistent approach to the management of Forth's estates

1.2 Estate Management is a general term used to include Tenancy Management and Environmental Management. They are linked to, but separate from the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures. Tenancy Management aims to encourage and support a tenant to keep to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. Where appropriate and necessary it will involve taking action to enforce compliance. Environmental Management aims to create a safe and secure environment for residents.

1.3 Estate Management encompasses a diverse range of issues such as:

- providing advice and assistance to tenants on tenancy matters and related issues;
- enforcing tenancy conditions and monitoring empty properties;
- providing advice and assistance to tenants and residents on services which enhance the local community, such as initiatives to reduce crime and environmental improvements;
- the management of communal areas and facilities in the Association's ownership;
- respond quickly to complaints received regarding the common areas;
- monitor the standard of contract maintenance to ensure a quality and efficient service and value for money to tenants and residents;
- the management and upkeep of the physical environment in the Association's ownership, and work with other agencies such as the local authority to ensure that areas under their ownership and responsibility are maintained to a satisfactory standard.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aim of the Association's Estate Management Policy is to outline the Association's intentions regarding the management of its estates. The main objectives being:

- tenants and residents are satisfied with the service provided by the Association, both within their home and within their local community;
- good landlord/tenant relationships are developed to encourage tenant interest and involvement within their area for the mutual benefit of both the Association and the local community;

- 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 and makes best use of the Association's rental income.

3.0 Communal Areas and Landscape Maintenance

3.1 Forth will set out high standards in our contract specifications for the maintenance of the common areas. The type of services the Association will provide to tenants and residents are Landscape Maintenance and Close Cleaning. Housing Management staff will liaise with the relevant contractor and ensure a quality service to Forth's tenants and residents.

We will endeavour to respond with three working days to any complaints regarding close cleaning or landscape services.

3.2 As part of its policy in respect of Common Areas, including Stairs and Entrances, Bin Stores, Drying Areas, Common Pathways and Parking Areas, the Association will:

- Carry out *fortnightly* inspections (Appendix 1) to check on both the fabric and cleanliness.
- Identify specific source of problems by either visiting individual tenants or holding group discussions with tenants, residents and local groups.
- Confirm action required to remedy problems in writing to the tenants and residents concerned.
- Continue monitoring to ensure improved standards are maintained.
- Arrange for repairs or graffiti removal to be carried out promptly once the need has been identified or reported.

3.3 *Fortnightly* inspections of these areas will be undertaken. In instances where it appears that such areas are being neglected, the Association will arrange a meeting with tenants, residents and local groups.

4.0 Garden Areas

4.1 Monthly inspections of garden areas will be undertaken but visits may be more often during the summer months.

4.2 Tenants who neglect their gardens will be identified and reasons for this investigated.

4.3 Tenancy conditions will be enforced if appropriate. Alternatively, practical advice and assistance will be arranged where appropriate. This might include referring tenants to services run by other Agencies.

5.0 General Environment

5.1 The Association will regularly monitor general environmental matters such as litter, street cleaning, lighting, abandoned cars, caravan parking, pigeon lofts, abandoned properties, condition of footpaths etc. and notify or liaise with the other Agencies responsible.

5.2 The Association will investigate complaints received about excessive levels of noise and if required, will liaise with other agencies. Tenancy conditions will be enforced.

5.3 If a tenant wishes to park a caravan, trailer, boat or similar item on land owned by the Association they must first request written permission from the Association. Permission will not be given to park such items in communal parking bays within a development.

6.0 Contact with Tenants and Residents

6.1 As part of its objectives of fostering good landlord/tenant relationships and involving tenants and residents in the upkeep of their community, the Association will encourage tenants and residents to take an active interest and participate in the wellbeing of their community and surrounding environment.

6.2 This is likely to be effected in the following ways by regular communications with individual tenants through newsletters, home visits, information days and meetings with organised Tenant and Residents Groups.

6.3 The Association staff will assess each area to determine if the frequency of Estate Management visits require to increase. The demand from different areas and the Estate Management problems which each present will vary according to the degree of management problems, e.g.:

- High level of vandalism or graffiti
- Poorly maintained environment (tenants' gardens, open spaces, play area, stairs, bin stores, back courts, etc)
- Neighbour disputes
- Parking problems
- Dog nuisance
- Abandoned properties

The required input by the Association staff will vary according to the level of need/demand as indicated by the foregoing factors.

7.0 Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems

7.1 The Association has separate Policies for dealing with Neighbour Disputes and Harassment Problems as the Association recognises that these complaints cannot be adequately responded to using the usual actions required for handling general complaints.

8.0 Data Protection

8.1 When implementing the policies and procedures of Forth Housing Association all staff and committee members must adhere to and be aware of the requirements of the Association's approved Confidentiality Policy and the Data Protection Act 1998. In situations where there may be any doubt about the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 it is recommended that the Association seeks the views of its legal advisors.

9.0 Equal Opportunities

9.1 Forth Housing Association believes that certain sectors of the population are disadvantaged by individual and group values, as well as by organisational structures. Forth Housing Association seeks to avoid all such forms of discrimination by ensuring that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins, religion, social background, disability, marital status, responsibility for children or dependants, gender, age or sexual orientation.

10.0 Appeals Procedure

10.1 Any appeal on a decision where consent had been refused should be made initially to the Housing Manager. Where the Housing Manager upholds the original decision, the tenant can pursue any further grievance through the Association's Complaints Procedure.

11.0 Policy Monitoring, Review and Period

11.1 Monitoring the estate management service includes items such as:

- Monitoring trends;
- Checking that the service is effective and fair to all tenants;
- Seeking tenants' views of the service;
- Reporting monitoring results on a regular basis to Committee and any Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO);
- Reviewing policies, practice and performance at regular intervals.

11.2 This Policy/Procedure will be reviewed no later than five years from the date of approval.

11.3 Consideration will be given to any changes in legislation, good practice or operational changes which may affect the content.

3/96 Management Committee Approval

5/97 Review Approval

3/01 Review Approval

7/07 Review Approval

