

Loddon Homes Limited

Estate Management Policy

1. **Note: How will this policy work with the change around that happens as a result of 21C Council**
2. **The Policy**

This Policy sets out Loddon Homes Limited's (LHL) principles for Estate Management activity and is specific to the land and property that is owned by LHL. Estate Management refers to the effective management of internal and external communal spaces around any LHL properties that are in our ownership. LHL strives to ensure that the neighbourhoods we operate in are attractive, well maintained, safe and secure.

3. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define a clear and concise approach to the management of the estates that Loddon Homes owns. Loddon Homes will ensure that the policy is communicated with all contractors operating on behalf of LHL. It clearly defines the organisations expectations regarding estate management and includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- Care taking
- Common area maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
- Removal of abandoned cars
- Estate visits
- Dog mess
- Health and safety issues

4. **Scope**

LHL aims to implement an Estate Management Policy that adopts a multi-agency approach. This is necessary given the mixed tenure of our developments. Loddon Homes will also promote sustainable development and maximising the potential of individuals, facilities and organisations and ensuring that all sections of the community feel safe.

5. **Review**

We will review this policy, procedures and staff training needs at least once every three years to ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL) officers working on behalf of LHL will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the Board for its approval.

6. Application

The LHL Board will delegate responsibility to WHL officers for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented in the organisations operations and with its nominated contractors.

5.1 Neighbourhood Inspections

Communal areas in general needs blocks and retirement schemes will be inspected periodically by LHLS nominated contractors. The purpose of these inspections includes:

- Remove fly tipped or dumped items;
- Monitor grounds maintenance and cleaning contractor performance; and
- Report any issues which could be a risk to health and safety such as trip hazards or obstructions of fire access routes.

In addition to any formal process of estate inspections, it is the responsibility of **all direct or contracted staff** who are out and about on our neighbourhoods to report issues that may cause a risk to health and safety or issues that may be causing damage to our properties or communal areas.

5.2 Grounds maintenance

All external communal areas owned by Loddon Homes shall be maintained by our nominated contractors to ensure grassed areas, hedges, shrub beds and weed killing of hard areas are kept to a specified standard.

5.3 Cleaning of communal areas

Where there is a specific charge for cleaning of communal parts, Loddon Homes will ensure that the service is delivered to a specified standard.

5.4 Tree maintenance

Tree works are based on an appropriate risk assessment with priority given to trees which are dead, diseased or dangerous. Other tree maintenance will be conducted on a cyclical basis subject to budget availability.

5.5 Community engagement & partnership working

Where possible we will work with residents and other stakeholders to improve our neighbourhoods.

5.6 Managing agents

Loddon Homes will maintain relationships with managing agents and ensure the services they provide are being delivered.

5.7 Environmental improvements

Subject to budget availability, Loddon Homes may identify and carry out environmental works to improve a communal area.

5.8 Abandoned vehicles and parking

Where there are parking issues which affect the neighbourhood we may consult with residents about introducing parking control measures. We will work with the Police to remove abandoned vehicles from our land.

5.9 Assistance to tenants

Subject to budget availability we may be able to help some residents' maintain their garden if they are unable to and they have no one to do it for them.

5.10 Responsibilities of residents

Specific areas of resident responsibility are set out in the tenancy agreement. However, we also welcome and encourage residents to report anything to us which impacts on the quality of their neighbourhood.

To safeguard residents' health and safety, particularly in the event of a fire and in line with fire risk assessments, Loddon Policy adopts a 'zero tolerance' approach to managing general needs communal areas.

This means that residents in general needs homes are not permitted to store any items in communal areas (except a door mat or a fitted carpet). This includes mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs which can only be stored where a designated scooter store is provided. We will offer contact information for occupational therapy advice to support disabled tenants to find a suitable alternative option.

We will remove any items left in general needs communal areas. Costs for this removal will recover through the recharge process (See section xx).

In retirement and extra care schemes, we have a 'managed approach' to the storage of items in communal areas. This is based on the reduced risk of fire because of scheme security and on-site staff. Storage of buggies and electric wheelchairs may be permitted in some communal areas as long as they do not cause any obstruction.

7. Charges

LHL has a recharge policy which means that residents are charged for any works we have to carry out which are their responsibility (under the terms of their tenancy or lease agreement). Where no individual can be identified, any costs will be charged back to the block or estate through a service charge.

All direct neighbourhood service costs will, where possible, be charged back to tenants and leaseholders via the service charge.

8. Value for Money

The tendering process for neighbourhood contracts (ground maintenance and cleaning) will ensure a balanced weighting between cost and quality.

As part of the process residents will be specifically consulted on a range of possible services and what these would cost. They are therefore able to make decisions on what they consider are value for money services.

Quality of services delivered by both contractors and in-house teams will be monitored against detailed service specifications, standards and performance measures to ensure value for money is achieved.

9. Monitoring effectiveness

Monitoring of neighbourhood management will be carried out in the following ways:

- We will publish cleaning and grounds maintenance contract specification information, so residents know what to expect to receive for their service charge.
- We will measure resident satisfaction of grounds maintenance through telephone surveys.
- We will ensure that neighbourhood inspections are completed and outcomes have been recorded.

10. Equality and Diversity

Loddon Homes is committed to ensuring the elimination of discrimination in all areas of its work. All customers should expect, and receive, equal standards of service delivery regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender status. This equality of standards also applies to the handling of personal and confidential information.

APPROVED