

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNAL AREAS POLICY

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: MARK HEBBLEWHITE, MAINTENANCE MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose the introduction of a Management of Communal Area's Policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At present the Council does not have a Management of Communal Area's Policy.
- 2.2 The proposed Management of Communal Areas Policy sets out the approach that the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) will take to manage enclosed communal areas and the areas that immediately surround blocks of flats.
- 2.3 It is considered that a policy will have a number of benefits for all stakeholders including residents, council staff and members of the public. These numerous benefits are outlined in the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 A communal area, as defined by the policy, includes.
- Communal entrances
 - Communal landings
 - Any shared stairwell, balcony, or access path
 - Communal gardens
 - Communal parking areas
 - Bin stores
 - Drying areas
 - Any cupboard area or loft that is located in a communal area
 - Communal lounges (Sheltered Accommodation only)
 - Communal kitchen (Sheltered Accommodation only)
 - Communal bathroom (Sheltered Accommodation only)
- 3.2 Management of Communal Area Policies are implemented by the vast majority of social housing providers in order to set out required standards relating to safety, repairs, maintenance and aesthetics.
- ## **4. The Case for a Communal Area Policy**
- 4.1 The Management of Communal Areas Policy sets out the approach that CoLC will take to manage enclosed communal areas and the areas that immediately surround

blocks of flats. The policy applies to both tenants of the Council and also leaseholders and anyone that visits or lives with a tenant or leaseholder. The policy also applies to tenants in General Housing properties as well as those in Sheltered Accommodation.

As detailed in the policy, a Communal Area Policy is required in order to,

- ensure the health and safety of all persons lawfully using communal areas
- ensure that all repairs and maintenance, including cleaning, is carried out on communal areas
- allow communal areas to be used in the best possible way for the benefit of all tenants, leaseholders, staff, and visitors
- explain what measures the Council take to monitor or control communal areas
- ensure all communal areas can be used safely where required in the event of an emergency or evacuation
- give clear advice to residents to maintain safety in across access routes in the event of an emergency

4.2 In addition, the policy also sets out both minimal and aspirational standards, specifications and technical details regarding approach routes ,communal, doors, intercoms, and entry systems, communal entrances, communal stairs, windows and internal glazing, walls, and ceilings, decoration, flooring, ventilation ,doors, lighting, directional signage, sheds and storage areas, car parks, garaging and garage areas ,bin areas ,refuse chutes ,and hoppers drying areas ,clothes posts and lines, gardens ,grassed areas and planting beds ,tree and hedges ,weed control and clearance and ramps/half steps.

4.3 At present a Communal Area Policy is not in place and is considered that a policy will have a number of benefits for all stakeholders including residents, council staff and members of the public. These include,

- The encouragement of “ownership” of communal areas by all concerned ensuring tenants, officers, contractors, and The Council accept their responsibilities and play their role in the upkeep and maintenance of communal areas to an agreed standard.
- Enforcement of the policy will reduce risks and hazards associated with fire by ensuring that non permissible items are not stored in Communal Areas, this will assist in ensuring that residents homes are safe and enjoyable places to live.
- Ensuring that all communal areas are accessible and free from hazards so that residents can exit the building safely and as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency. This will also allow the emergency services easy access to the property or person in need of assistance.
- Continuous improvement of the standard of communal area’s by ensuring that cleaning and day to day repairs in communal areas are carried out quickly, on time and to an agreed standard.

- Fly tipping removals are carried out quickly, on time and to an agreed standard.
- To ensure that our residents are satisfied, whilst maintaining value for money within the service at all times.
- Clear identification of repairs the CoLC are responsible for, and which repairs tenants are responsible for within the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- Involvement and empowerment for tenants in that a policy further enhances their ability to influence and be involved in the management of repair and maintenance services such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks.
- The provision of a clear reference point identifying items that are and are not permitted in communal areas will further enhance both safety and aesthetics. The policy sets out how unauthorised items in communal areas will be dealt with.

4.4 An agreed standard will ensure consistency during the maintenance and refurbishment of communal areas, and it will ensure that safety critical aspects relating to communal areas meet legal and regulatory requirements. These include:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Housing Act 2004 (Housing, Health, and Safety Rating System)
- The Housing Act 1985
- The Housing Act 1996
- Building Regulations 2000, 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Torts (Interference with Goods) 1977
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1994
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

A Management of Communal Areas Policy will assist with helping people feel safe and welcome in the communities in which they reside by ensuring that the safety and aesthetics of communal areas is maintained and improved in line with an agreed standard.

5.2 Let's deliver quality housing

A Management of Communal Areas Policy will assist in improving housing standards for our tenants and their visitors, it will assist with fostering a sense of belonging and it will help The Council to provide safe, secure, and sustainable accommodation.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications contained within this report as costs will be contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

- 6.2.1 A Mobility Scooter Policy will be required which will link in to the Communal Area Policy.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

We do not perceive there to be any negative impacts that would warrant a Equality Impact Assessment at this stage.

6.4 Human Resources

There are no HR implications that will arise as a result of the introduction of this policy.

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

N/A.

6.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

We do not perceive there to be any significant community or environmental impacts that would arise as a result of the introduction of this policy.

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

Corporate Health and Safety have confirmed that they have no comments to include on this report.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 (i) Options Explored,

We do not envisage any risks associated with introducing this policy.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That the policy to approve the introduction of The Management of Communal Area's Policy be recommended to Executive for adoption.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? 2

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer:

Matthew Hillman, Assistant Director
Email address: matthew.hillman@lincoln.gov.uk