

Housing & Property Services

# Managing Our Estates

2022 (V1)



**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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<b>1. Aim</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Scope</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Definitions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Principles</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Specific Policy Areas</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1. Open Spaces	5
5.2. Estate Improvements	5
5.3. Managing Vehicles on Housing Land	6
5.4. Communal Areas	6
5.5. General Maintenance Assistant (Neighbourhood Services)	7
5.6. Mobility Scooters	7
5.7. Rough Sleeping	7
<b>6. Responsibilities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Supporting Procedures</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Consultation &amp; Communication</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1. Aim

The Council aims to ensure our estates are tidy, free from rubbish and do not pose any risk to health and safety, with any shared open spaces available for all tenants to enjoy.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to all housing-owned open spaces and communal areas, both external and internal

# 3. Definitions

- Open Space: *Land which is laid out for the purpose of public recreation.*
- External Communal Areas: *Outside areas which adjoin buildings and are intended for use by the residents of those buildings.*
- Internal Communal Areas: *Closed-off internal areas specifically used as a way to access individual properties – these include corridors, stairways, etc.  
(For the purposes of this document, this does not include communal rooms/community centres).*

# 4. Principles

- To ensure all tenants are aware of their responsibilities, including adherence to the Council's Waste Management Policies
- To encourage tenants, residents and members to be involved in the maintenance of estates
- To inspect housing-owned open spaces annually, and monitor throughout the year.
- To authorise and undertake grounds maintenance works where necessary.
- To ensure the safety of all communal areas by undertaking inspections each quarter.
- To support Property Services with estate improvements.

## 5. Specific Policy Areas

### 5.1. Open Spaces

- 5.1.1 Annually, between the months of July and November, Housing Officers complete an inspection on every open space, owned by the Housing Revenue Account, where it is adjoined by more than one property. This also included the areas surrounding garage blocks.
- 5.1.2 The purpose of these inspections are to assess if there are any ongoing or one-off grounds maintenance works required; if there are any health and safety risks; if there are repairs; and to also evaluate the areas by applying a good, satisfactory or poor rating based on the aesthetics, upkeep and practicality of the area. This evaluation helps us monitor and manage the estate, and is used in prioritising any improvement works. Where appropriate, Members may be involved in this process
- 5.1.3 Housing Officers ensure that, following an inspection, all identified works are reported and completed; prioritising health and safety works. Any grounds maintenance works identified as likely to be required periodically, will be placed on the grounds maintenance contract.
- 5.1.4 Outside of the months July to November we may receive reports of issues on housing open space or we may identify issues when visiting properties. In these cases inspections will be carried out and items reported, but there will be no evaluation.

### 5.2. Estate Improvements

- 5.2.1 Once an area has been evaluated, those given a rating of poor or fair are then assessed by an Assistant Surveyor within the Property Services team to identify any improvements which can be made to the design that would increase its rating.
- 5.2.2 Residents within the locality of an area selected for an estate improvement will be consulted on what they feel the area needs. Estate improvements may result in an increase of parking, more manageable grounds maintenance, increased security, play areas, recreational areas, etc.

## **5.3. Managing Vehicles on Housing Land**

- 5.3.1 Very few estates have parking permits, we therefore encourage tenants to be respectful to their neighbours when parking in communal areas.
- 5.3.2 Housing Officers ensure vehicles parked in housing-owned car parking areas are parked considerately and legally. Vehicles should be tax, insured and road-worthy. Trailers and caravans should not be parked in car parking areas. Housing Officers follow the procedures set out in Managing Vehicles on Housing Land procedure.
- 4.3.3 Some estates have reference to no parking areas within the covenants of the deed of transfer of the land. Tenancies on these estates are varied to include reference to these covenants.

## **5.4. Communal Areas**

- 5.4.1 Many of our flat blocks have shared access, with internal communal stairways and corridors, and outside shared space. As these spaces are accessed by all residents it is important that they are free from any items that may cause an obstacle or trip hazard and ensure fire safety regulations are adhered to.
- 5.4.2 The Council provides a notice board in these areas displaying appropriate information on fire safety, key contact details and contractor contact etc.
- 5.4.3 While any reports of issues with these communal areas are responded to in a timely manner the Council are proactive in undertaking full inspections of the communal areas on a quarterly basis. The main purpose of these inspections is to ensure that any health and safety hazards are reduced or removed and that the building is meeting fire safety regulations.
- 5.4.4 If items belonging to residents are being stored in the communal areas, there is a process for Housing Officers to request that these be removed or they will be confiscated.
- 5.4.5 A cleaning contract is in place for all internal communal areas, inspections will be timed to take place the day following the fortnightly clean, so cleaning standards can be assessed and the contract effectively managed. The cost of this cleaning is recovered from tenants in their weekly communal facilities charge.
- 5.4.6 The Council encourages tenants to make use of the external communal areas. The Council will not permit, any permanent structures to be sited by tenants; any items that may pose a health or safety risk; or, any activity that limits or excludes use by others. The Council is not responsible for the security of any individual tenant's items.

## **5.5. General Maintenance Assistant (Neighbourhood Services)**

- 5.5.1 The General Maintenance Assistant is employed to provide low-level ongoing maintenance to estates and external areas and to undertake the health and safety inspections of the communal areas to flats/maisonettes.
- 5.5.2 This includes works such as weeding, planting, leaf-clearance, litter-picking, bulk rubbish removals, and minor repairs.

## **5.6. Mobility Scooters**

- 5.6.1 Mobility scooters cannot be stored within internal communal areas due to fire risk, namely; blocking escape routes, and risk of electric fires from the scooter itself.
- 5.6.2 Where mobility scooters are found within internal communal areas, we will request the owner removes the scooter immediately and will support the owner to find suitable storage elsewhere. This may be in a tenant's home or external to the building.
- 5.6.3 The Council is under no obligation to provide storage facilities or access ramps for mobility scooters.
- 5.6.4 Owners of mobility scooters should charge their vehicles in a safe manner. If stored externally, charging cables should not pose a trip hazard to others. Mobility scooters should not be charged within internal communal areas.

## **5.7. Rough Sleeping**

- 5.7.1 If evidence is found that a person is using an internal or external communal area (including cupboards, sheds, outhouses, etc) as somewhere to sleep due to homelessness, the Housing Options team and Rough Sleeper Support Service will be notified immediately.
- 5.7.2 Belongings such as tents, sleeping bags, clothes, etc may be removed and stored for a period of 28 days or until reclaimed by the owner.

## 6. Responsibilities

- Housing Officers
- General Maintenance Assistant

## 7. Supporting Procedures

- Flat Inspections Procedure
- Managing Vehicles on Housing Land Procedure
- Managing Trees on Housing Land Procedure
- Property Inspection Procedure
- Estate Evaluation Procedure

## 8. Consultation & Communication

Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Tenant Liaison Panel.

The policy will be communicated through At Home (Tenant's Newsletter) and any other available communication channels. It will also be available on the Council's corporate website.

## 9. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed in response to changes in legislation or statutory instruments by the Neighbourhood Services Manager or Housing Services Manager.

In the absence of any legislative changes to trigger a review, this policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains organisationally accurate.

<b>Title:</b> Managing Our Estates	<b>Approved:</b> Executive Board on 31/03/2022	<b>Effective from:</b> 06/06/2022	<b>Next review:</b> 31/03/2025
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