

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Housing Estates Management Policy

For residents

Policy version	1.0
Last reviewed	New policy
Approved by HSLT (date)	2026
Approved by SLT	2026
Effective from	2026
Policy review: due date	2028
This policy supersedes all previous versions. Owner – Director of Housing Management	

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1. Introduction and scope of this policy

- 1.1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest is committed to providing quality estate management and ensuring that our estates are maintained and inspected to a high standard.
- 1.2. We will comply with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, set by the Regulator of Social Housing and comply with legislation as part of our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and estates safe.
- 1.3. Estate management primarily concerns communal or shared areas of estates, gardens, and frontages which contribute visually to the estate. This policy does not apply to land that is not owned or managed by the Housing Service.
- 1.4. Communal areas are those parts of the estate not included in tenancies, leases or licences and for which we are responsible as a landlord. This includes:
 - Staircases and stairwells
 - Communal landings, walkways and balconies
 - Shared paths, gardens and yards
 - Roadways and parking areas
 - Cycle stores
 - Playgrounds and play equipment
 - Intake and electrical cupboards
 - Waste and recycling bin enclosures
- 1.5. Individual balconies, gardens, and frontages are the responsibility of the resident.
- 1.6. This policy applies to any tenant or leaseholders living in an estate owned or managed by the council's Housing services. Tenants or leaseholders living in street properties outside of a housing estate are outside the scope of this policy.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The aims and purpose of this policy are to ensure that we:
 - Define the roles and responsibilities for the Council and its residents in respect of managing Housing Estates
 - Determine the properties and land that are defined as housing estates for management within the scope of this policy and for the recovery of service charges
 - Provide transparency to our residents regarding our position and intention for the entire scope of works carried out, maintained and inspected within managing estates

- Keep our communal areas and neighbourhoods safe, clean and maintained and ensure the provision of estate management to a good standard
- To carry out regular inspections of all estates
- Work to create neighbourhoods and communities that Waltham Forest residents are proud of
- Work with internal and external partners to cultivate quality environments that help to deter anti-social behaviour and crime

2.2. Residents are given the opportunity to provide feedback on our services as they are at the heart of our services.

2.3. Matters that fall outside of the scope of this policy will be referred to by any internal or external partners as part of our partnership working arrangement.

3. Key terms and definitions

3.1. The key terms and definitions as referenced throughout this policy as follows:

Key term	Definition
<i>Estate</i>	A housing estate is a planned residential area where many homes are built together as one coordinated development. These estates usually contain houses or flats constructed at the same time, laid out with shared roads, paths, and communal spaces, and often form a distinct neighbourhood.
<i>Caretaking</i>	Our in-house communal cleaning services include sweeping and mopping communal areas and making sure that they are adequately serviced, safe and secure.
<i>Communal areas</i>	Shared areas, which are managed by us (as the landlord) and can be accessed by other residents. They include: •Gardens, open green spaces, pavements, unadopted roadways, and parking areas • Hallways, landings, bin areas, stairs, lifts and shared doorways • Community buildings, play areas and cycle stores
<i>Estate inspection</i>	A visual check of the communal areas of an estate to assess its condition and identify where standards can be improved.
<i>Grounds maintenance</i>	The act of keeping all communal landscapes healthy, clean, safe, and attractive. We keep our grounds tidy and pleasant by maintaining hedges, shrub beds, plants, cutting grass and

	carrying out tree works.
<i>Residents</i>	Tenants and/or leaseholders, including shared owners, living on a council owned or managed housing estate.
<i>Parking</i>	Where available, we provide parking for resident vehicles on housing-managed car parks. We will introduce controls for parking following a positive review of resident consultation.
<i>Garages</i>	Garages referred to within this policy do not form part of a resident's home and can be rented individually.
<i>Pests</i>	A generic term for vermin, rodents, and insects which are commonly considered to be a pest. This can include Statutory Pests, where legislation states they must be controlled by Local Authorities and owners and occupiers of land and properties within those Local Authority boundaries; and Non-Statutory Pests, being all other pests, which are not considered Statutory.
<i>Pest control</i>	Treating pests may include blocking their entry to our communal areas of our estates in line with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
<i>Anti-social behaviour</i>	Behaviour that meets the definition under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, including harassment, nuisance, or annoyance affecting tenants.
<i>Torts notice</i>	A section 41 notice served in line with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 to remove items in communal areas

4. Our approach

- 4.1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest provide an estate management service for sites with communal areas which, as the landlord, we are required to look after. These services are normally paid for via a service charge. We:
- Provide services that meet contractual, legal, regulatory, health and safety and/or maintenance needs
 - Provide services which have been specifically requested and agreed with the residents following positive consultation
 - Consult with residents when we introduce or change services where possible, in line with the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003
 - Only charge for services we provide
 - Demonstrably deliver value for money
- 4.2. Where a tenant management organisation (TMO) or managing agent is responsible for the service delivered, we work with them to ensure services delivered demonstrate value for money and are provided to a high standard

5. Legislation and other obligations

- 5.1. The council has a legal duty and obligation to manage housing estate services in line with the following legislation:
- Equality and Diversity Act 2010
 - Protections from Harassment Act 1977
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - The Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 2004
 - The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
 - The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (including statutory nuisance provisions)
 - The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
 - The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
 - The Equality Act 2010 (including duties relating to accessibility and non-discrimination)
 - The Building Safety Act 2022
 - The Fire Safety Act 2021 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), where applicable
 - The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, in relation to communal areas
 - The Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984

6. Activities in communal areas

- 6.1. Communal spaces, such as gardens, are intended for the peaceful enjoyment of all residents. Some activities in these spaces are prohibited or subject to permission from the Council.

6.2. Barbecues may not be used anywhere on our estates unless prior permission is granted by the Council. Permission will generally only be given for barbecues held in a communal outside space as part of an estate event, and conditions will be attached to the permission.

6.3. Fireworks may not be used anywhere on our estates.

7. Air conditioning

7.1. Residents must obtain written permission from the Council before installing any air conditioning unit, including fixed, external, wall-mounted, window-mounted, or condenser units.

7.2. Permission will only be granted where the proposed installation:

- Does not adversely affect the structure, appearance, or fabric of the building.
- Does not create excessive noise, vibration, condensation, or other nuisance to neighbours.
- Complies with planning requirements, building regulations, and any other statutory obligations.
- Does not obstruct access routes, fire escape routes, communal areas, windows, balconies, or ventilation systems.
- Is installed by a suitably qualified and competent contractor.

7.3. Residents are responsible for all costs associated with the installation, maintenance, repair, operation, and removal of any approved air conditioning equipment.

7.4. Unauthorised air conditioning units may be considered an alteration to the property and residents may be required to remove the equipment and reinstate the building to its original condition at their own expense.

7.5. Waltham Forest Council reserves the right to withdraw permission where an installation causes a nuisance, presents a health and safety risk, or has been installed contrary to the conditions of approval.

8. Balcony solar panels

8.1. Residents must obtain written permission from the Council before installing any solar panels, including fixed, external, wall-mounted, or balcony units.

8.2. Permission will only be granted where the proposed installation:

- Does not adversely affect the structure, appearance, or fabric of the building.
- Does not cause nuisance to neighbours.
- Complies with planning requirements, building regulations, and any other statutory obligations.

- Does not obstruct access routes, fire escape routes, communal areas, windows, balconies, or ventilation systems.
- Is installed safely and without risk to residents.

- 8.3. Unauthorised solar units may be considered an alteration to the property and residents may be required to remove the equipment and reinstate the building to its original condition at their own expense.
- 8.4. Waltham Forest Council reserves the right to withdraw permission where an installation causes a nuisance, presents a health and safety risk, or has been installed contrary to the conditions of approval.

9. Cold weather actions

- 9.1. We will take reasonable care to ensure that our communal areas are safe during ice or snow.
- 9.2. Where possible, we will grit communal pathways when ice is expected, or apparent on inspection.
- 9.3. We will clear snow from priority areas first (thoroughfares and pedestrian routes to properties occupied by vulnerable residents). We cannot guarantee that all pathways will be cleared of snow, however we will do our best to clear a path to the building entrance.
- 9.4. If ice or snow occurs outside normal working hours, we will begin clearance or treatment as soon as we can on the next working day.

10. Communal areas

- 10.1. **Use of shared or communal areas**
- 10.2. There is no general right for residents or commercial users to store, display, place, or keep anything in communal areas. This may only be done with our permission. We have a duty to actively manage communal areas and remove any items posing a hazard, causing an obstruction, or any item left there without our permission.
- 10.3. We will remove items without notice if they pose a risk or cause obstruction. In other cases, we will give reasonable notice for the item to be removed.
- 10.4. Items commonly kept outside, such as bicycles, pushchairs or mobility equipment/scooters, must be kept in areas designated or approved for this purpose, or in the resident's home or a storage facility.

11. Drones

- 11.1. The use of drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) on or over Council housing estates is not permitted due to significant privacy concerns, including the risk of intrusion into tenant's homes and private spaces.

- 11.2. The Council reserves the right to use drones; however, residents will be sent communication at least 7 days in advance of use.

12. E-bikes and e-scooters

- 12.1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest recognises that e-bikes and e-scooters can provide affordable and environmentally sustainable forms of transport. However, if these vehicles are not used, stored or charged safely, they may present risks to residents, visitors, buildings, and communal areas. These risks arise particularly from the use of lithium-ion batteries, which can pose a fire hazard if damaged, modified or charged incorrectly. Removals will be arranged immediately as soon as they are detected in communal areas.
- 12.2. E-bikes and e-scooters are also not permitted to be charged in communal areas.

13. Estate agent boards

- 13.1. Residents and leaseholders are not permitted to erect estate agent boards in communal areas or on Council-owned land. Boards may only be displayed within the boundary of the property being sold or let and must comply with planning regulations. Any boards placed in communal spaces or causing obstruction will be removed without notice.

14. Estate inspections

- 14.1. The standard of cleaning will be assessed through consistent and regular inspections, appraising the quality of all communal areas and services. We will manage a planned programme of inspections, with the frequency of each inspection based on the size of the estate, services provided, repair history, current issues, and resident involvement and satisfaction. Inspections may therefore vary in frequency depending on the location.
- 14.2. All caretaking and cleaning issues identified through estate inspections will be recorded and updated prior to the next inspection. The results of our estate inspections will be recorded and logged, along with a total score for the estate against the published standards.
- 14.3. Issues identified outside of estate inspections, from residents, council officers or other staff, will be recorded and dealt with by council staff.
- 14.4. Upcoming inspections will be advertised on estate noticeboards and in newsletters. We will encourage residents to attend and participate in inspecting their estate on a periodic basis.

15. Electric Vehicles (EVs) charging points

- 15.1. Waltham Forest aims for 80 per cent of all journeys that start or end in the borough to be made by walking, cycling or using public transport by 2030, ahead of the Mayor of London's 2041 target. For the remaining 20 per cent of journeys, we want these to be made as sustainably as possible, using Electric Vehicles (EVs), to reduce emissions created by transport, particularly those from private vehicles.

- 15.2. We ensure charging points are retrofitted on all current Waltham Forest Housing Estates, where feasible, to enable access for all residents. These should be introduced, managed and maintained as part of the wider public EV charging point network. Residents can make a request for an EV charging point on our website.

16. Filming requests

- 16.1. Filming or photography for commercial purposes on estates requires prior written consent from the Council. Requests must be via our website and will be assessed for potential disruption, health and safety risks, and impact on residents. Conditions may include time restrictions, insurance requirements, and fees. Unauthorised filming will be treated as a breach of this policy.

17. Flags

- 17.1. Residents may display flags within their own property boundaries, provided they do not cause obstruction, nuisance, damage or are offensive or discriminatory. Flags must not be attached to communal structures, such as railings, lampposts, or buildings. They should not hang outside balconies, windows or fences. However, flags are permitted to be displayed within the boundaries of a private garden.
- 17.2. Any flags displayed in communal areas without permission will be removed. Offensive or discriminatory flags are strictly prohibited in all areas.

18. Fly tipping and bulk waste removal

- 18.1. Residents are responsible for ensuring that their refuse and recycling is disposed of safely, tidily and as directed by Council staff. Refuse collection is the responsibility of the Waste and Recycling Team. We will work with the Waste and Recycling Team to ensure that appropriate facilities and arrangements are available for the disposal, storage and collection of refuse.
- 18.2. Dumping unwanted bulk items or rubbish anywhere other than designated locations is fly tipping, as is use of these facilities by non-residents. We will take prompt action to remove hazardous material and enforcement action.

19. Garages

- 19.1. Garages on estates are available for rent under separate licence agreements. They must only be used for the storage of vehicles or personal items and not for commercial purposes or hazardous materials. Subletting garages is prohibited. The Council reserves the right to inspect garages and terminate agreements where misuse is identified, or repairs and cyclical works are required.
- 19.2. The Council is responsible for ensuring that garages are secure and in a good state of repair. Issues should be reported to the Council.

20. Gardens

- 20.1. Residents are responsible for the upkeep of their individual private gardens associated with their home by maintaining grass and hedges and ensuring they

do not cause a nuisance to neighbours. The responsibilities for maintaining gardens and trees are set out in the respective Tenancy and Leasehold agreements.

- 20.2. Trees in individual private gardens must not be cut down, removed, relocated, plant or significantly alter any tree connected with their home unless the council has given written permission in advance.

21. Gas cylinders

- 21.1. Gas cylinders must not be stored in communal areas or inside flats where, prohibited, by safety regulations. Residents are responsible for safe storage and disposal in line with manufacturer guidance and legal requirements. Any cylinders found in communal spaces will be removed immediately due to fire risk.

22. Grounds maintenance

- 22.1. The Council is responsible for the maintenance of open spaces and communal areas on housing estates, primarily maintaining grass, hedges, flower beds and naturalised areas. The aim is to increase areas managed for biodiversity in consultation with residents and stakeholders.
- 22.2. Residents that wish to pursue gardening initiatives on estates will need to complete an application form and seek consent from the Housing Management Team.
- 22.3. Where trees are in communal gardens and are causing property damage or are unsafe, they will be inspected by the Council's Trees Team.

23. Communal keys and fobs

- 23.1. Communal fobs or communal multi lock keys can be ordered via the [Waltham Forest Council website](#). Orders will then be reviewed and processed by the Place Team and a request for the fob or key to be created and sent to the library for the resident to collect.
- 23.2. This does not include garage keys, pram shed keys, intake cupboard keys or keys to residents front door.
- 23.3. Fob orders are limited to three fobs per household. If a fob is damaged/broken, the resident must contact the Place Team to provide the fob keys serial number for the fob to be deactivated before placing a new fob key order.

24. Metal grilles

- 24.1. Residents cannot install a metal grille outside their front door as they pose a serious health and safety risk. Metal grilles prevent access to a property in an emergency, endangering both the occupant and the emergency services.
- 24.2. Residents who have installed a metal grill will be asked to remove it or provide the council with permission to remove it on their behalf. Failure to remove the

metal grill will result in a torts notice being served, the metal grill being removed and put into storage for 30 days. There will be a charge of £60.00 per visit to retrieve your metal grill from the storage company.

25. Noticeboards and electronic noticeboards

- 25.1. The Council will provide noticeboards and where possible electronic noticeboards to keep residents informed about key messages. Noticeboards and electronic noticeboards are for official Council communications only. Residents can post personal advertisements or notices with prior approval. Electronic notice boards will display Council messages, safety alerts, and community updates. Tampering with notice boards or posting unauthorised material will result in removal.

26. Pets

- 26.1. We want all residents to enjoy living on our estates and recognise the positive benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring to individuals and communities. However, it is essential that residents ensure pets are controlled within communal areas, to avoid harm to animals, nuisance, or safety concerns for other residents.
- 26.2. Residents who own a pet are expected to ensure that:
- Pets are always kept under proper control, particularly in communal areas. Dogs must be kept on a lead unless within a designated off-lead area.
 - Pets must be cleaned up after.
 - Pets do not cause nuisance, distress, or annoyance to other residents, visitors, or staff. This includes excessive noise (such as persistent barking), aggressive behaviour, or intimidation.
 - Residents comply with all relevant legislation, including laws relating to dangerous dogs and animal welfare.
- 26.3. Pet owners must ensure their pets do not foul in shared or public areas of the estate. Any fouling must be cleaned up immediately and disposed of appropriately in designated bins or waste facilities.

27. Pest control

- 27.1. The council aims to ensure all properties in its ownership are free of pests.
- 27.2. Where an infestation can be directly attributed to someone's living conditions or habits the Housing Service will advise the resident on how best to rectify the situation and ensure it does not re-occur.
- 27.3. We will treat any reported pests in communal areas and keep residents updated on the treatment plan in place.

28. Plaques

- 28.1. Residents will not be granted permission to install commemorative plaques on or around the council housing estates. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Plaques attached to buildings, walls, railings, fences, benches, trees, or other estate structures.
- Memorial items placed in communal areas, gardens, open spaces, or shared buildings.

28.2. Residents wishing to commemorate a loved one are encouraged to explore appropriate alternatives through the Council's Cemeteries Service. Details can be found on our website.

29. Pram sheds

29.1. Pram sheds are provided on some housing estates to support residents who require storage for prams, pushchairs, or approved mobility equipment. Where provided, pram sheds are communal facilities and remain the property of the council:

- Pram sheds may only be used for the storage of prams, pushchairs, and approved mobility aids.
- Storage space is limited and is not guaranteed; use of pram sheds is not an entitlement.
- Residents must ensure that items are stored neatly and do not obstruct access routes, emergency exits, or create a fire, health, or safety risk.
- The storage of other items, including but not limited to furniture, bikes, electrical appliances, fuel, or flammable materials, is not permitted.

29.2. The Council may introduce reasonable conditions of use, including access arrangements, labelling of items, eligibility criteria, or time-limited use where demand exceeds capacity.

29.3. Items stored in pram sheds are left at the owner's risk. The Council accepts no liability for loss, theft, or damage.

29.4. Where pram sheds are misused, the Council may require items to be removed following reasonable notice. Items may be removed without notice where they present an immediate safety risk.

30. Resident CCTV and ring doorbells

30.1. Residents can install cameras inside their property as long as alterations are not required, and the cameras are not pointing outside the property. They should check with their Tenancy Officer if they have any queries or need clarification.

30.2. If we are notified of a resident or a third-party installing a doorbell camera in an inappropriate location or using a doorbell camera or other device in a way that goes beyond our harm threshold of harassment or intimidation, we will initiate an investigation at the earliest opportunity and take appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

30.3. Please consult the [Housing CCTV policy](#) for more information.

31. Resident recharge

- 31.1. Where intentional damage is caused to internal or external communal areas, fixtures, fittings, or shared facilities, the cost of repair or replacement may be recharged to the tenant or leaseholder. Rechargeable costs may include, but are not limited to, repairs, replacement of damaged items, cleaning or clearance work resulting from the damage and charges associated with contractor attendance and administrative costs

32. Resident responsibilities

- 32.1. To achieve consistently high standards on an estate, it is essential that there is close cooperation between residents and the Council.
- 32.2. Residents have their own part to play in ensuring the estate is kept at its best and must comply with their responsibilities for maintaining their surrounding environment in good order, as well as their own individual property. In doing so, residents must respect the rights of their neighbours and surrounding community, as laid down in their tenancy and lease agreements.
- 32.3. Residents must help keep communal areas clean and well maintained through appropriate use of bins and bulk term collection, responsible dog ownership; not causing damage to, or littering in, communal areas and being a good neighbour.

33. Resident safety

- 33.1. The safety of residents on our estate is our top priority. We will ensure any issues that could impact on the safety of residents are identified through our estate inspections. Any repairs needed for our estates will be prioritised based on the impact of resident safety. Where improvements are identified that would improve the safety of residents, these will be considered as part of our asset management strategy.

34. Signage

- 34.1. We will ensure that signage on our estates is clear, necessary, appropriate and well maintained. We will ensure that health and safety and other mandatory signage is present where required, such as 'no smoking' signs in internal communal areas.
- 34.2. We will avoid unnecessary signage and remove outdated and obsolete signage.
- 34.3. We actively support and encourage residents to enjoy our outside spaces. We recognise having an active lifestyle is important to residents' wellbeing. We will remove 'No ball games' signage from our estates and provide safe spaces for play wherever possible. Any abuse of communal spaces will be dealt with under the Council's Housing Anti-social behaviour policy.

35. Vehicles and parking (including abandoned vehicles and caravans)

- 35.1. Many of our estates feature parking for residents and visitors. We have controlled parking schemes in operation on several estates to deter unauthorised vehicles.
- 35.2. An abandoned vehicle is a vehicle which does not have a known owner. If a vehicle is legal, parked on the public highway and the owner tells us that it is not abandoned, the Council has no power to remove this vehicle.
- 35.3. We will only investigate a vehicle as abandoned when it meets the definition of abandonment set out under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1798. The Government has provided a criterion which clarifies that a vehicle is likely to be abandoned if -
- It is untaxed or has no registered keeper in DVLA records.
 - It has been stationary for a significant time (e.g. 14 - 30 days or longer).
 - It shows signs of being damaged, rundown, or unroadworthy – flat tyres, broken windows, severely rusty or mouldy, missing number plates, or burnt-out
- 35.4. An officer will inspect the vehicle within 5 working days and if deemed as abandoned, depending on its condition, we can issue three types of notices of removal:
- 24-hour notice
 - 7-day notice
 - 15-day notice
- 35.5. These notices will give the owner of the vehicle the specified period to remove it. If it's not removed by the expiry date/time of the notice, the vehicle will be removed.
- 35.6. Any vehicles which are seen to be blocking access for vehicles, parked dangerously or causing an obstruction for emergency vehicles, waste collection vehicles or residents' vehicles, the Place Team will liaise with police and the Neighborhoods Team to take enforcement action and consider removing the vehicle.

36. Residents with exceptional needs or are experiencing vulnerability

- 36.1. We recognise that some residents may have exceptional needs or be vulnerable due to personal circumstances, health conditions, disability, age, or life events. We are committed to ensuring that estate management services are delivered in a way that is fair, proportionate, and responsive to individual needs, while maintaining safe and well-managed estates for all residents
- 36.2. Vulnerability will be considered when carrying out estate inspections, managing

communal areas, and considering enforcement action. However, vulnerability does not remove the requirement for residents to comply with their tenancy or lease conditions, nor does it exempt behaviour that places others at risk or results in serious nuisance or health and safety concerns.

- 36.3. Please find the [Housing Vulnerability Policy](#) for more information.

37. Breaching this policy

- 37.1. If a private person is in breach of this policy, the Place Team may consider taking appropriate legal action.
- 37.2. If a resident is in breach of this policy, the Place Team may refer the resident to the Tenancy Team for breach of tenancy or the Home Ownership Team for breach of lease. This may also include legal action.

38. Responding to complaints, resident satisfaction and learning lessons

- 38.1. If a resident is not satisfied with the way a housing estate is being managed, they can make a complaint in line with our [Complaints Policy](#).
- 38.2. Once the complaints process is completed, and if the issue has not been resolved, a resident can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

39. Monitoring and review

- 39.1. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery
- 39.2. This policy will be reviewed every two years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidelines

40. Equality and Diversity, Vulnerability, and Reasonable Adjustments

- 40.1. When implementing this policy, the Council will have regard to the Equalities Act 2010 and show due regard to an individual's medical condition or vulnerability such as mental health and learning disabilities, as and when applicable.