

## **PETS POLICY**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

1.1 This policy statement outlines Erimus Housing's approach to the keeping of pets by its residents. Erimus Housing recognises the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring. However, controls must be in place to prevent irresponsible pet ownership which can cause suffering to animals and a nuisance to neighbours.

1.2 This policy covers the following issues:-

- Which pets can be kept and in what circumstances;
- How information on responsible pet ownership is communicated to residents;
- The actions Erimus Housing will take where pets are kept inappropriately or cause nuisance to neighbours.

### **2. REFERENCES**

2.1 External

#### **Legislation and regulation**

- Dangerous wild animals Act 1976;
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

#### **Guidance**

- KLOE 6 - Tenancy and Estate Management

2.2 Internal

#### **Related documents**

- Tenancy management policy and procedure.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

3.1 There are no definitions required for this policy.

### **4. POLICY CONTENT**

4.1 Applicants for housing are asked to indicate on their application form if they intend to keep a pet. This will not prejudice their application unless they plan to keep a pet for which permission will not be granted. If this is the case then this matter must be resolved before an offer of accommodation is made.

4.2 Erimus Housing's Tenancy Agreement sets out the basic rules regarding the keeping of animals they are as follows:-

- Residents must not keep a pet (for definition see section called "your responsibilities as a tenant") without prior consent from Erimus Housing;
- Residents who live in a property with a shared entrance must get permission from their local Housing Office if they want to keep pets, however, dogs are not allowed in properties with shared entrances;
- Erimus Housing may withdraw consent if a nuisance is caused, or if it is considered that a number of animals should be restricted;
- Dogs should be exercised on a lead if on communal areas of the estate or scheme;
- If an animal fouls any area it should be cleared up immediately by the owner;
- Pets must not cause nuisance to neighbours, staff and visitors, this includes noise nuisance and animals which are allowed to stray;
- Pets must not cause damage to the property, and residents may be charged for any damaged caused to Erimus Housing property;
- Residents cannot run a business from their home, this includes breeding animals for sale or boarding kennels.

4.3 Residents should seek permission to keep pets in all circumstances as this allows Erimus Housing to record on the house file what animals are being kept.

4.4 Permission will be normally granted for small domestic animals and birds. Permission will not be granted for the following:-

- Farm animals – for example, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, chicken, ducks;
- Animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976- examples of animals registered under the Act are certain types of venomous snake, certain types of spider and various breeds of monkey;
- Dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
- A dog or cat where the household already has 2 dogs or 2 cats or a dog and a cat.

4.5 Permission may not be granted where there is an ongoing problem with pet ownership in the household or there has been a problem in the past.

4.6 When a resident seeks permission to keep a pet they will be required to sign a formal agreement which will detail what is expected of the resident.

4.7 Erimus Housing produces a standard leaflet on responsible pet ownership which can be used at any time during the tenancy, it includes:

- In what circumstances permission will be granted;
- Legal requirements and responsibilities of pet owners;
- What Erimus Housing would consider as 'nuisance behaviour';
- General advice on pet ownership; neutering, vaccinations, insurance etc;

- What you should do if a neighbour's pet is causing you problems;
- What action Erimus Housing can take concerning nuisance pets;
- What action Erimus Housing may take in the case of cruelty or neglect;
- Useful contacts for advice and assistance.

4.8 A range of behaviours can cause nuisance to neighbours, the following are examples, however, this is not a full list:

- Roaming and unattended animals;
- Pets fouling in communal areas and in owners' gardens and this not being cleared immediately;
- Pets fouling in neighbours' gardens;
- Excessive noise;
- Over-population of animals within a household;
- Unpleasant odours from pets;
- Aggressive animals.

4.9 In the majority of cases Erimus Housing will aim to resolve the situation informally and by agreement. However, in some instances this is not possible and the following actions will be considered, it should be noted this is not an exhaustive list:

- Arranging for a professional mediator (UNITE) to become involved;
- Withdrawing permission to keep an animal;
- Restricting the number of animals;
- Making responsible pet ownership part of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract;
- Involving statutory organisations such as the Police or the Local Authority;
- Involving voluntary organisations such as the RSPCA;
- Serving an injunction to oblige the owner to start or stop undertaking certain actions or to remove the animal;
- Terminating the tenancy where tenancy conditions are breached.

4.10 Where a member of staff witnesses cruelty or neglect they will report this to the RSPCA. Where cruelty or neglect is reported to Erimus Housing by a third party they will also report this to the RSPCA making it clear that they have not witnessed this themselves. The person reporting this to Erimus Housing will also be encouraged to contact the RSPCA.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

5.1 Erimus Housing recognises that it operates in a community within which there is wide social diversity, and are committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity. With particular regard to Assistance dogs or animals, each individual case will be examined to ensure the animal is registered and is providing needed assistance to the resident. This also applies to properties with communal entrances, where under usual circumstances dogs would not be allowed.

- 5.2 Through the management of our tenancies we aim to treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.
- 5.3 To enable all residents to have clear information and equal access to our properties, Erimus Housing publishes clear information in a range of appropriate languages and formats and through a range of media. Feedback is also accepted through a variety of different routes to reflect individual customer's preferences or needs.

## **6. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Erimus Housing recognises the importance of working in partnership with our customers to develop and continuously improve our services and raise standards.
- 6.2 Erimus Housing actively involves all customers at the beginning of decision making processes and ensures tenants are empowered to play a part in wider consultation and involvement structures, as detailed in full in our Resident Involvement Strategy.
- 6.3 To demonstrate this commitment, this policy:
- Will be reviewed in consultation with service users and customers;
  - Involves customers in the monitoring and testing of service delivery standards laid out in this policy and relevant procedures;
  - Will be developed and reviewed in light of customer feedback, comments and complaints.

## **7. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW**

### **7.1 Monitoring**

7.1.1 The monitoring of outcomes is essential for Erimus Housing to track the impact of our approach to managing applications for the request to keep pets. Monitoring of the implementation of the policy and the associated procedures will consider the following at monthly intervals, with quarterly analysis reporting to Committee:

- The performance against service standards and targets set out in the procedures;
- Customer satisfaction and level of complaints, reviews and appeals;
- The policy will also be monitored in light of any subsequent responsive repair or recharge raised in relation to any damage caused by pets

7.1.2 Monitoring information will be reported to Erimus Operations Committee and publicised to customers on a regular basis.

## 7.2 Review

7.2.1 Monitoring results will be used by Erimus Housing to inform future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

- The current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements, and reflects current good practice;
- The aims and objectives of the policy being met;
- The current policy outcomes meet the needs and aspirations of our diverse customer base;
- Service users are aware of and understand the policy and believe it to be consistent and fair;
- The policy provides sufficient choice for customers;
- The service offers value for money;
- Partnership arrangements are working effectively.

7.2.2 Overall monitoring and review of the policy will be undertaken in consultation with:

- Staff groups;
- Board members;
- Existing and future service users;
- Resident and community groups;
- Relevant partners, local voluntary agencies and other statutory services as relevant.

7.2.3 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITY

8.1 The Chief Executive retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Group Director of Operations is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.