



OWNER OCCUPIER POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Regeneration and investment work by Erimus Housing will occasionally impact on owner occupiers of properties purchased under the Right to Buy/Right to Acquire on either a leasehold or a freehold basis.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out the policy principles Erimus Housing will adhere to when regeneration does affect owner occupiers, either directly or indirectly
- 1.3 Erimus Housing's staff, Board Members and contractors will be expected to adhere to the principles laid down in this policy and have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is actively applied in practice.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 2.1 Our vision is to be a major regional housing and regeneration player in the development of mixed tenure sustainable communities in Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley sub-region.
- 2.2 Regeneration is a key priority for Erimus Housing in order to tackle low demand, meet Decent Homes targets and provide affordable quality homes that meet present and future customers needs.
- 2.3 Erimus Housing will ensure that owners and leaseholders are fully consulted on proposals for improvement, option appraisal and regeneration, which affect their home, surrounding environment or immediate neighbourhood.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The Board of Erimus Housing will approve the development of regeneration schemes, following a formal Option Appraisal study or Erimus Housing regeneration project.
- 3.1.2 Owners of freehold and leasehold properties will be individually consulted on regeneration proposals and Erimus Housing will ensure

comprehensive advice and assistance is provided to enable owners to understand the implications for them.

3.2 Regeneration

- 3.2.1 Erimus Housing will ensure that owner occupiers are regularly and consistently consulted and informed about regeneration, investment or improvement proposals using appropriate, inclusive and imaginative ways to involve and owners throughout the life of the project.
- 3.2.2 Homeowners will be visited on a one-to-one basis in their own home by a senior officer in the Regeneration team, who will fully explain the options available to them, arrange for the property valuation and advise on relevant compensation.
- 3.2.3 Where owners are willing to sell, Erimus Housing will pay full market value for properties. Owners will be given the option to obtain their own valuation if they disagree with the initial valuation and Erimus Housing will pay for this second valuation (up to a reasonable value), providing it is undertaken by a RICS registered surveyor.
- 3.2.4 Erimus Housing will ensure that there is adequate financial provision in place within the Business Plan to meet the costs associated with acquisition, compensation and relocation of owner occupiers and leaseholders, where required under an agreed regeneration scheme.
- 3.2.5 Owner occupiers who meet the qualifying criteria will be paid a Homeloss Payment equal to either 10% of the property value, or £4,000); whichever is the greater, Disturbance Allowance, Legal Fees and survey and valuation fees (where relevant, up to a reasonable limit).
- 3.2.6 Erimus Housing have developed a range of rehousing options for owner occupiers (detailed at Appendix 1), in order to meet needs and ensure that owners are able to relocate to a suitable property in the tenure of their choice.
- 3.2.7 Owners in Erimus Housing Regeneration areas can opt to rent a property from Erimus Housing or another RSL by applying through Choice Based Lettings for suitable properties.
- 3.2.8 Erimus Housing will try wherever possible to avoid the use of transit accommodation in order to minimise the disruption and inconvenience to owners.

Investment Plan

3.2.9 Erimus Housing's Investment Plan work will generally effect owner occupiers in one (or more) of the three areas and therefore attract the following proposed policies

(i) Leaseholders

All leaseholders are to be fully consulted on any proposed changes to arrangements for maintenance, management or service provision, which could have a substantial effect on them and estimates of proposed capital works will be provided within the set timescales as laid down by legislation in order for them to comment and participate in the works.

(ii) Party Wall Act

Where Investment Plan works impinge upon owner occupier's property, all necessary way-leaves shall be obtained and consultation carried out in line with the Party Wall Act.

(iii) Requests for improvement work

Owner occupiers who requests improvement works to their property while Investment Plan works are ongoing; will be directed to the relevant Partnering Contractor for consideration, providing there is no risk to the overall scheme progress.

Erimus Housing will not enter into any contractual arrangements and owners will have to make their own arrangements with the Partnering Contractor.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Erimus Housing will delegate to the Chief Executive responsibility for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented.

4.2 Erimus Housing will develop procedures, which ensure effective implementation of this policy and provide training for staff to ensure they fully understand the wider issues surrounding owners, the legislative framework and our policies and procedures.

4.4 The Regeneration Directorate will be responsible for overseeing or co-ordinating the process and will formally communicate with other relevant internal departments and personnel, to ensure those involved in the delivery are aware of their responsibility.

- 4.5 The Director of Regeneration will ensure that officers involved in the implementation of this policy are suitably skilled to deliver the required procedures to any agreed timescales.
- 4.6 The timescale for attainment will be agreed with owner occupiers by Erimus Housing and a formal schedule or plan generated to incorporate the relevant legal and statutory requirements.

5 PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The sustainable regeneration of neighbourhoods and the delivery of the capital works programme are crucial to the success of Erimus Housing. As a consequence Erimus Housing attach the highest priority to all aspects of this policy.

6 RESPONSIBILITY

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Senior Officers to ensure that:
- All staff are aware of Erimus Housing's policies;
 - All staff are trained on the policies;
 - Monitoring records are collected in accordance with Erimus Housing's policies and procedures;
 - Customers are adequately informed of the policies;
 - Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Erimus Housing will consult with owner occupiers about any capital work that will incur recoverable charges and provide a statement of the work required, any work which is optional, and alternative estimates of costs.
- 7.2 Erimus Housing will consult owners and leaseholders on proposed changes to arrangements for maintenance, management, or service provision, which could have a substantial effect on them.
- 7.3 Erimus Housing will contact owners affected by regeneration or improvement work in writing, outlining the decision of the Board and providing clear, accurate jargon free information of the next steps.
- 7.4 The Company will work with residents and established community groups, and provide the necessary advice, support, and assistance.
- 7.5 Printed material will be in a user-friendly format, written in plain English, with translated or large print versions provided where

appropriate. In addition Erimus Housing will consider the use of other media, including translating printed material onto cassette tapes or CD for those people who do not read any language.

8 REVIEW

- 8.1 Erimus Housing will review this policy, procedures, and staff training needs at regular intervals to ensure in order to operate best practice, achieve measurable results, and aim for continuous service improvement.
- 8.2 This policy and procedure will be automatically reviewed following policy or legislation change, as required by the Housing Corporation or DCLG.
- 8.3 The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken.