

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Housing Services Committee

**Date:** 04 February 2021

**Reporting officer:** Nicole Arthur, Service Delivery Manager (Housing Repairs)

**Subject:** Estate Management Policy

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To inform Housing Cabinet Committee of the proposed Estate Management Policy as set out in Appendix 2 of this report

### **Recommendations:**

1. For Housing Cabinet Committee to support the implementation of the Estate Management Policy.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Gravesham Borough Council aims to ensure its communal areas and estates are well maintained, safe, attractive places that people can enjoy and take pride in.
- 1.2 Estate Management is a vital part of housing management and a particularly important service from a resident's viewpoint. The Chartered Institute of Housing uses the term in its widest sense to refer to property management and services to tenants and leaseholders (residents) which aim to enable them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes and a decent, safe and secure environment.
- 1.3 Estate Management incorporates a number of services provided by the Council such as caretaking, grounds maintenance, graffiti removal, health and safety compliance and waste collection.
- 1.4 A clean and tidy estate means a lot to residents and because of this it is important to have clear standards as to what they can expect. The Council is committed to making sure residents have estates that are clean and cared for, safe and secure and in a good state of repair.

## **2. Current Situation**

- 2.1 The responsibility of the Caretaking Service transferred to the Service Delivery Manager (Housing Repairs) in January 2020. It quickly became apparent that there were a number of inconsistencies across the estate sites in terms of the

frequency and standard of service that was being delivered, particularly in relation to caretaking. This created confusion for staff which impacted on their morale and also how residents felt about the estates, causing complaints.

- 2.2 To deal with these issues an Estate Management Policy has been developed to ensure that standards on council managed estates become more focused and transparent and the following objectives are met:
  - 2.2.1 Develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties, estates and neighbourhood.
  - 2.2.2 Manage the environment around our properties and communal areas effectively.
  - 2.2.3 Ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities.
  - 2.2.4 Set appropriate estate management standards and to measure performance and tenant satisfaction.
  - 2.2.5 Deliver a service which is proactive, responsive and provides excellent value for money.
- 2.3 In order to develop the policy it was necessary to have input from all of the departments who deliver services on the estates, ensuring a joined up approach.
- 2.4 A review of complaints, enquiries and service charge challenges have also been reviewed as part of the process to ensure the policy is reflective of the service we wish to provide.

A copy of the policy can be found at Appendix 2.

### **3. Rate My Estate Guide**

- 3.1 In order to provide a consistent monitoring framework for the standard of the estates and for the caretakers to be performance managed, the Rate My Estate Guide has been developed. A copy of which can be found at Appendix 2 within the policy.
- 3.2 The guide aims to make caretaking standards on council-managed estates more focused and transparent. To do this, the guide describes caretaking standards using a combination of text and visuals. These descriptions form a clear framework, against which caretaking standards can be fairly assessed and any area of improvement can be managed.
- 3.3 Residents will also be encouraged to 'Rate Their Estate' using the guide which will be made available on the website, residents will also be encouraged to contribute their views on how their estate can be made great.
- 3.4 The Service Manager (Landlord Services) has also contributed to the Estate Management Policy. In addition to the monthly caretaking inspections, each estate will receive an estate inspection carried out by the Housing Officer. The frequency of the inspection will be dependent on the number of properties on the estate and will have a real focus on neglected homes, overgrown gardens and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.5 A copy of the inspection form can be found within the policy.

#### **4. Background Papers**

- 4.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

**IMPLICATIONS****APPENDIX 1**

Failure to implement the policy could mean that we fail to fulfill our responsibility as a Landlord, particularly in relation to health and safety issues that may put both the tenant and the structure of our property at risk

<b>Legal</b>	The policies are based on the Council's legal obligations as a landlord and tenancy conditions and ensure that obligations are clear and transparent
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	The policies enable the service to manage tenants' expectations in regard to what work will be carried out as part of tenants' service charges.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	N/A
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No, the policies ensure that an equitable service is delivered to its residents.</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. The policies ensure that an equitable service is delivered to its residents.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	<p># 1 People</p> <p>Provide A Proactive, Supportive &amp; Financially Efficient Housing Service: high quality tenant management experienced through a service making full use of its assets.</p> <p>Put Our Customers First: Implement a suite of quality and effective front line service</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>	N/A
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The policies take a robust approach to damage on the estates and fly-tipping
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	The website will be updated to ensure there is clear information regarding Estate Management.

**Safeguarding  
children and  
vulnerable adults**

N/A