

## **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**

### **STORAGE IN COMMUNAL AREAS – ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

#### **1 STATEMENT ON POLICY**

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Cambridge City Council manages communal areas in all our blocks of flats, with particular reference to ensure fire risks are minimised and make sure our residents are safe.
- 1.2 This policy replaces the previous ‘Policy on Storage on Housing Owned Communal Areas’.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure a clear, consistent approach to prevent the storage of any items in the communal areas to reduce risks, increase fire safety and improve the overall appearance of the internal communal areas of Cambridge City Council’s owned flats.
- 1.4 The Policy has been written to support our ‘Fire Safety in Flats’ leaflet which has been issued to new tenants and all leaseholders and which was drawn up in collaboration with Fire Safety experts and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- 1.5 The overall aims of this policy are:
  - To ensure the safety of residents living in the Council’s blocks of flats and their visitors;
  - To reduce un-necessary risks and comply with our duties under primary legislation including fire safety laws and the Housing Act 2004; and
  - To ensure the Council meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities.
- 1.6 For the purpose of this policy a communal area is defined as those parts of a block of flats including: communal hallways/walkways, shared staircases, balconies, bin and storage areas, access paths, communal gardens and drying areas.

#### **2. KEY ISSUES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- 2.1 Where a resident stores items in the communal areas in breach of the Zero Tolerance Policy, they will be given timescales to remove them in accordance with our procedures. The Council will use a range of powers to enforce the policy and the onus is on residents to keep the communal areas clear.
- 2.2 These procedures may include action to remove, store or dispose of items if not removed by the resident. When a high value item is identified for removal, a sticker will be attached to it and photographed with the sticker attached to it for reference. Residents will be given notice to remove the item.

- 2.3 It is not feasible for Housing Services to remove and store all item/s found in communal areas. Those items deemed of low value or perishable will be disposed of if not removed within a reasonable time, as indicated by the notice attached to the item.
- 2.4 The Council reserves the right to recharge either the individual resident, or all residents of the block, the reasonable costs of removing and disposing of items.

### **3. HOUSING SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 The Council's officers and our contractors will be responsible for carrying out inspections of our communal areas to ensure the Zero Tolerance Policy is enforced.
- 3.2 Fire risk assessments of the building will be reviewed as required by legislation to ensure compliance.
- 3.3 The Council will ensure fire procedures are implemented.

### **4. TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 Communal areas do not belong to any resident, either tenant or leaseholder, including the area immediately outside a front door.
- 4.2 Residents do not have a right to store or leave anything in the communal areas of the building.
- 4.3 Communal areas must be kept clear and free from obstruction at all times.
- 4.4 Fire doors to escape routes must not be held open.
- 4.5 The Council reserve the right to remove any item left in a communal area including, but not exclusively: pushchairs, prams or buggies, rubbish bags, wheeled bins, lockers and cabinets, washing machines, tumble dryers and other goods awaiting disposal, unwanted bedding and mattresses, children's toys and play furniture, shopping trolleys, loose carpets and door mats, plant pots, unwanted mail or newspapers.
- 4.6 Bicycles, mopeds and motorbikes must not be stored in communal areas as they could hamper evacuation – unless specific storage has been provided by the Council. Servicing or cleaning of these items should not take place in the communal areas.
- 4.7 Mobility scooters must be stored inside the resident's home or storage shed. It cannot be considered a reasonable adjustment to allow a resident to keep mobility aids in communal areas if these present a risk to other residents. In such cases, the Council will endeavor to accommodate the needs of a resident with disabilities where possible, for example assessing the feasibility and cost of providing additional storage for mobility aids. The Housing Officer can also support customers to secure suitable alternative accommodation if their current home does not meet their needs.
- 4.8 Bin store doors should be kept closed – large items of household waste such as furniture must not be left in the bin store.
- 4.9 Individual wheelie bins should not be left in communal areas or under staircases. Where provided, wheelie bins should be stored away from the building.
- 4.10 Electrical meter cupboards must not be used for storage and should be kept locked shut.

- 4.11 Storage cupboards in communal areas should be kept locked shut and should not be used for the storage of flammable items.

## **5 MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

- 5.1 Senior Managers within Housing Services will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and keep the policy under review as a result of any future legislative changes.

## **6 BACKGROUND LEGISLATION**

- 6.1 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- 6.2 Building Regulations 2010.
- 6.3 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 6.4 Housing Act 2004.