

Committee:	Dated:
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	16/05/2017
Subject: Pets Policy	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
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Summary

This report is presented to outline the review of the City of London Housing Service Pets policy.

The Pets policy has been reviewed, in line with current legislation, as a public-facing document to support the decisions made and enacted by the City's Estate Management teams in relation to the management of our properties.

The key changes to the document are:

- The addition of further detail relating to resident responsibility for keeping animals and ensuring no nuisance is caused;
- The addition of an 'exceptions' clause to enable staff to show appropriate discretion where necessary.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Pets policy for use by the Housing & Neighbourhoods Division as part of our Estate Management practice.

Main Report

Background

1. This policy was developed in 2015 following a comprehensive consultation with residents. Prior to the 2015 review, larger animals such as cats and dogs were not allowed to be kept in our properties.
2. Following the consultation, residents remained clear that they did not wish for dogs to be kept, but there was a clear mandate for the allowance of indoor cats.
3. The changes in the 2015 review have been retained. Residents are allowed to keep up to two indoor cats, and dogs may only be kept in houses with self-contained gardens, with the exception of registered assistance dogs which may be kept in any property.

Current Position

4. The Pets policy has been reviewed, and some further clarity regarding resident responsibilities, particularly in cases of nuisance have been added to the policy.
5. A situation arose whereby a resident was allowed to keep a dog that was not registered as part of an accredited scheme. It was stated that the dog was for 'emotional support'. However, no accredited scheme exists for such animals. An exception was made in this case, owing to the recognition that removal of the animal would affect the resident's wellbeing. However, the previous policy did not allow for exceptions to be made. This meant that, whilst staff acted with the best intention, the decision was outside of our policy. The new policy includes a clause which allows a variation to the policy in exceptional circumstances.
6. Consultation has been carried out with residents of the Almshouses properties and a local policy is being developed in response to that consultation.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. The effective implementation of a Pets policy supports one priority in the Department of Community & Children's Service Business Plan:
 - Priority 4 – Homes and communities – Developing strong neighbourhoods and ensuring people have a decent place to live.
8. Estate staff will need to take action against any residents breaching the terms of the policy. It may take time to build up a case, for example, if cats are allowed to roam outdoors, estate staff will need to take photos and log incidents. However we are confident that estate staff are equipped to manage these types of incidents.
9. The use of the Pets policy is expected to offer clarity to residents and support officers in their decision making, which will reduce time spent discussing and explaining the stance relating to pets.

Conclusion

10. In conclusion, this policy has been reviewed as a matter of good practice, to reflect the current legal position and to support officers in their work. This policy will also assist with the understanding and expectations of our residents in regards to the management of their property.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Pets policy.

Appendix 2 – The Equality Analysis for the Pets policy.

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