

## **Local Decant Policy**

### **Crescent House Window Replacement Project**

#### **1. Basis for this Policy**

This policy applies to the Crescent House window repair and replacement project (“the Crescent House project”). The policy will remain in force for the duration of the project.

This policy is written in accordance with the provisions of the Decants Policy of the City Corporation’s Department of Community and Children’s Services (Housing Division). That parent policy provides (section 7) that local policies may be implemented to address the needs of specific projects.

#### **2. Policy Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Enable the successful delivery of the Crescent House project by providing a clear statement of our approach to decanting residents to allow the works to take place
- Provide a clear statement of our approach to inform residents of what to expect
- Set out our commitment to anticipating and meeting the needs of residents, to minimise disruption to them
- Make clear the support and help that residents can expect during the project in relation to decanting and temporary accommodation

#### **3. Policy Statement**

The Crescent House project will require residents to vacate their homes in phases, to allow extensive works to be completed to windows and other building components, which can only safely be carried out without residents being in occupation.

We aim to minimise disruption and inconvenience to affected residents by:

- Adhering to the provisions of our Decants Policy
- Providing affected residents with suitable alternative (temporary) accommodation while the work is being undertaken
- Assisting them with moving belongings which cannot remain in place, and storing these in an appropriate place
- Anticipating residents’ needs by carrying out assessments of their circumstances prior to the project starting
- Communicating clearly with residents at all stages of the project, so they know what is happening and how it will affect them

#### **4. Application of this Policy**

This policy applies to the following classes of occupier at Crescent House:

- Secure tenants

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Version: 1

- Leaseholders
- Sub-tenants of leaseholders, provided that they hold an Assured Shorthold Tenancy and this was registered with the City Corporation as required by the lease

The policy also applies to household members of the above classes of occupier, if they reside at Crescent House and meet the residence requirements set out in the Decants Policy.

## **5. Housing Needs Assessment**

We will carry out an assessment of the circumstances of each household currently resident in the building, in accordance with the Decants Policy.

This person-focused assessment will establish any support needs, requirements for alternative temporary accommodation, and details of household composition.

It will also be used as a means of communicating with affected residents about how the project will be managed, how they might be affected, and what we can do to help and support them.

## **6. Notification of Works**

Affected residents will be given reasonable written notice of works that require them to vacate their home. The notification will include:

- Projected start and finish dates
- Description of the works to be completed
- Details of suitable alternative temporary accommodation
- Information on how they will be supported, and their belongings safeguarded, during the works

A named contact will be provided to the resident, who will be able to answer any questions and provide appropriate advice.

We will ensure that any communication needs are taken into account, and will contact residents in a suitable alternative format, or in person, where required.

## **7. Alternative Temporary Accommodation**

We will provide temporary alternative accommodation for any eligible resident who requires it, for the duration of the works to their home. Residents will occupy this alternative accommodation under a Licence to Occupy, which is not a tenancy and does not have security of tenure. Security of tenure is maintained at all times on the decanted property.

Residents may make their own arrangements if they wish, however we are not able to cover costs of alternative accommodation without prior agreement.

We aim to provide suitable accommodation on Golden Lane Estate, however if this is not possible, we will discuss alternative options with the affected resident. Where we

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Version: 1

cannot provide an alternative temporary home at Golden Lane Estate, we will aim to provide one within a reasonable distance of it.

Any alternative accommodation will take account of the needs of the resident and their household, and we will provide the same number of bedrooms as is currently occupied.

Where residents require adjustments due to disability or additional needs, we will accommodate reasonable adjustments (e.g. auxiliary aids or adaptations) and provide temporary accommodation which meets their needs.

The temporary accommodation will include white goods including laundry facilities. Essential furniture will be provided, which may vary according to household size and composition.

## **8. Payment of Rent and Other Charges**

Tenants remain liable to pay rent and service charges on their homes while they are away, plus any other liabilities such as Council Tax.

Leaseholders remain responsible for paying all charges and liabilities relating to their properties while they are in temporary accommodation.

No charge will be made for use of the temporary alternative accommodation.

## **9. Utility Bills**

Residents remain responsible for all utility bills in their home while they are away, however we will reimburse an appropriate amount to cover usage by our contractors while works take place in each property.

Where residents have a top-up meter, we will ensure that this is topped up for the duration of the work and handed back with at least the same credit remaining as when the resident temporarily moved out.

Residents will not be liable for utilities costs in their temporary accommodation.

## **10. Costs**

We aim to ensure that residents are not left out of pocket due to being temporarily accommodated elsewhere. We will cover the cost of:

- Removal of belongings, and returning them following completion of works
- Storage of any belongings removed for the duration of the works
- Cleaning the resident's home following completion of the works

## **11. Insurance**

We will always take reasonable care to avoid damage or loss to any property or personal belongings of residents. We will ensure that appropriate insurance is in place to cover liability arising from any aspect of the project, including the removal, storage and handling of personal belongings.

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Version: 1

## **12. Permanent Rehousing**

While it is anticipated that tenants will wish to return to their homes following completion of the works, we will explore the option of permanent rehousing for those tenants with a live housing application at the point the project commences. Any offer of permanent alternative accommodation will be made in accordance with our Allocations Scheme.

The properties on Golden Lane Estate which are to be used for temporary accommodation during the Crescent House Project are not available for permanent rehousing of decanted residents, as they are required for the duration of the project.

## **13. Support Services**

During the Crescent House project, we will ensure that affected residents will be provided with appropriate support and assistance. This includes:

- A named officer who will maintain contact with them during the decant process and respond to any queries
- Assistance with moving or storing belongings
- Transport to and from alternative accommodation, if necessary
- Access to advice and assistance from staff employed as part of the project to assist affected residents

Where any resident requires more in-depth help, for example from an agency such as Adult Social Care, we will make the appropriate referral with their consent and cooperate with that agency to ensure the resident is supported.

## **14. Communication**

Clear and regular communication will be maintained with residents in the planning stages and throughout the decant process. City Corporation staff will be available to address any concerns or questions residents may have, and regular updates will be provided regarding the progress of the work on their homes.

We will take account of communication needs and preferences, and these will be discussed as part of the needs assessments.

## **15. Decanting Plan**

A detailed decanting plan or scheme will be developed with resident input, to outline how the decanting process will be implemented. This plan will also contain detail on matters of importance to residents, including the provision of support and assistance throughout the process, handling and storage of belongings, and other matters.

## **16. Feedback and Complaints**

Residents will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their decant experience, including the accommodation provided and the overall process. This feedback will be used to continually improve our decant procedures in the future.

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Version: 1

Residents who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service they receive as part of the Crescent House project may contact us to complain. Complaints will be responded to under our Housing Complaints Procedure.

### **17. Review**

This policy will remain in effect for the duration of the project. It will be reviewed periodically or in response to emerging issues. Any material amendments must be authorised by the relevant Committee.

### **18. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

All personal data currently held on residents and their circumstances, or gathered from residents as part of pre-project assessments, will be stored and handled securely and in accordance with our data protection obligations and Corporate or Departmental policies.