

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Estate Management Policy

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

REGULATORY AND STRATEGIC SERVICES TEAM

Approved by: Corporate Director of Housing, Regeneration and Operations

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1. Purpose

The aim of the estate management service is to support the community in keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean, safe and well-maintained.

To support this aim, the purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the role Stoke-on-Trent City Council (SoTCC) will have in managing areas in the city where there are large groups of homes owned by SoTCC (estates).
- To ensure consistency across the estate management service.

2. Scope

Estate management covers a broad range of activities in relation to outdoor spaces, resident safety and the environment. This policy provides information to explain SoTCC's approach towards each of these activities, including the expectations placed on tenants and leaseholders.

Some aspects may be explained in more detail within other policies. This policy should be read hand in hand with the Tenancy Management Policy and the Anti-Social Behaviour Cross Tenure Policy, due to the close connection between these services.

This policy applies to SoTCC tenants throughout, with sections on Communal Areas and Living in Apartments also being applicable to leaseholders.

In this Policy the reference to “tenants/tenant” means persons who occupy their property under the provisions of the council's periodic weekly tenancy agreement provided under the provisions of Part VI of the Housing Act 1985 and Part V of the Housing Act 1996.

The reference to “leaseholders” means persons who occupy their property under a registered leasehold estate and who acquired the property under the provisions of Part V of the Housing Act 1995 (Right to Buy provisions).

The reference to “residents and or community” in this Policy shall mean SoTCC tenants and leaseholders.

3. Key Principles

The key principles of Estate Management which are also aligned to SoTCC's corporate vision and strategic plans are:

- To ensure neighbourhoods and communal areas on our estates are clean and well-maintained.

- To provide services that follow the principles and deliver on the commitments set out in our Tenants' Charter.
- To help ensure communities are safe and residents feel safe, working in partnership with tenants, resident groups, stakeholders within SoTCC and external agencies.
- To respect and protect the environment.
- To support the community in a way that is transparent and provide a decision-making process that is consistent, clear and fair.
- Ensure tenants (and where relevant, leaseholders) understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Ensure the statutory and regulatory responsibilities set out by the Regulator of Social Housing are met.

The policy is aligned to the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement and aims to

ensure that there is a clear understanding of the obligations of both tenants and SoTCC as

the Landlord. It is also aligned to individual lease agreements, aiming to provide clarity on

the obligations of both leaseholders and SoTCC as the freeholder.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with the following legislation:

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equalities Act 2010
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Localism Act 2011
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

The Regulator of Social Housing has published a new set of Consumer Standards with effect from 1st April 2024.¹ The Consumer Standards are a set of requirements all social landlords have to meet. This policy addresses the key areas of the standards by specifically addressing the following requirements:

- Safety & Quality Standard

¹ [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards-for-landlords)

- When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.
- Registered providers must identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas.
- Registered providers must ensure that the safety of tenants is considered in the design and delivery of landlord services and take reasonable steps to mitigate any identified risks to tenants.
- Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas
- Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard
 - Registered providers' housing and neighbourhood policies must be fair, reasonable, accessible and transparent. Where relevant, policies should set out decision-making criteria and appeals processes.
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
 - Registered providers must work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces.
 - Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.
 - Registered providers, having taken account of their strategic objectives, the views of tenants and their presence within the areas where they provide social housing, must:
 - a) identify and communicate to tenants the roles registered providers play in promoting social, environmental and economic wellbeing and how those roles will be delivered; and
 - b) co-operate with local partnership arrangements and the strategic housing function of local authorities where they are able to assist local authorities in achieving their objectives

5. Impact assessments

Impact Assessments have been considered and applied when developing the policy with particular considerations applied to the areas described below:

Equality impact

SoTCC recognises that it provides housing for communities which include wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal access to services.

This policy aims to treat all customers fairly, with respect and professionalism. In

line with the duty placed on the local authority under the Equalities Act 2010 specific consideration of the impact of this policy has been given to people with protected characteristics, including gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and marital status. The approach adopted within this policy focuses on understanding individual circumstances in order to provide appropriate advice and support; this includes understanding the needs of tenants who have protected characteristics. Consideration will therefore be given to language barriers, accessibility and cultural issues which may affect a tenant's ability to manage their tenancy or seek advice on problems, and resolutions which take account of the individual's beliefs and abilities.

SoTCC will enable all our tenants to have clear information and equal access to available services and information in a range of appropriate languages and formats will be provided when requested. This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive regardless of the ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious belief, or disability of service users or residents. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed as part of reviewing the policy document in order to inform any changes that may be required.

From time to time SoTCC may ask tenants to provide details of their gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation in line with the protected characteristics identified within the Equalities Act 2010 to help SoTCC to deliver more effective, appropriate and inclusive policies and practices. All data collected is kept securely, used only for monitoring purposes in accordance with SoTCC's Privacy Policy.

The completed Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

6. Policy Detail

Estate management reflects the wider role that SoTCC has in areas where there are large groups of properties owned by SoTCC. In these areas SoTCC is more than just a landlord, there is also a responsibility for neighbourhood sustainability and some aspects of the environmental quality in the local area.

6.1. Supporting the Community

SoTCC will have a presence on the estates and be accessible through carrying out activities that support the community. These activities may include but aren't limited to: estate walkabouts litter picks, environmental days and days / weeks of action.

Estate walkabouts may include:

- Ward walks: these are organised and attended by the senior management team and ward councillor
- Street Inspections: these are carried out by Estate Officers and involve inspecting all streets where there are HRA properties, land and pathways. For more information please see Section 6.8.

Activities will be carried out in conjunction with relevant partners, who will be identified based on the specific project. For example, Councillors, the Police, Resident Associations, Environmental Crime, Highways and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The location of activities will be determined on a need basis, considering feedback received from tenants and councillors.

6.2. Communal Areas

Note: this section applies to both tenants and leaseholders.

SoTCC owns and manages a number of apartments across the city. This type of accommodation will have communal areas which are repaired and maintained by SoTCC. A communal area is a space that is shared by and accessible to all tenants and leaseholders living in a building. These areas can be either outside or inside.

Inside communal areas may be:

- communal entrance doors
- stairs, corridors and lifts
- facilities for refuse disposal
- the communal lounge/ activity space (Sheltered Housing Schemes)
- guest room facility (Sheltered Housing Schemes)
- laundry / drying areas (Sheltered Housing Schemes)

Outside communal areas may be:

- bin store areas
- sheds
- laundry drying areas
- communal gardens or outside area within the curtilage of the apartment block
- the footways owned by SoTCC
- grassed or landscaped areas
- garage sites
- parking areas
- fencing and walls

For high rise blocks and medium rise blocks (with exception of a number of blocks where a separate cleaning arrangement is in place) the cleaning of the communal areas is undertaken by contractors appointed by SoTCC. The cleaning of small low-rise blocks (four and six apartments) is currently under review.

It is a requirement of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and SoTCC to ensure that fire safety regulations are met and fire escape routes are clear. To maintain the safety of all tenants, leaseholders, visitors, staff and fire officers, all communal areas must be kept clear of items that can:

- increase the intensity of a fire
- increase the risk of a fire starting by the introduction of an ignition source or giving off toxic smoke
- be a potential trip hazard
- block or hinder escape routes for occupants
- block or hinder routes for the Fire Service entering the building to rescue occupants or tackle the fire

This includes personal effects, such as (but not exclusively) plants, pictures and tables. In line with developments in fire safety legislation, tenants and leaseholders are not allowed to have a door mat of any size outside of their property situated within the communal area. Items such as mobility aids (including mobility scooters, mobility walkers and electric wheelchairs), bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters, pushchairs and any similar items can be a trip hazard and are not allowed to be left in communal areas. Tenants and leaseholders should also not store any items under communal staircases. Storage cupboards, for example where communal cleaning materials might be stored, will always be kept locked.

Tenants and leaseholders will be requested to remove any items in communal areas and in the case of repeated failure to do so, items may be removed and disposed of by SoTCC.

SoTCC is committed to keeping the communal areas free from fire and other health and safety hazards, therefore Estate Officers will carry out inspections of these areas on a regular basis. They will also look for any repair, cleanliness or security issues. In addition to this, volunteer tenants and leaseholders also complete inspections of high rise apartment blocks and report any issues. This ensures that there is a balanced perspective between tenants, leaseholders and SoTCC. To join this group, or for more information, please contact Housing.Engagement@stoke.gov.uk

6.3. Living in Apartments

Note: this section applies to both tenants and leaseholders

Tenants and leaseholders in apartments will, in many instances, have neighbours to the side, above and below their property, as well as shared access through communal areas. Therefore, further consideration needs to be given to avoid any disruption or nuisance that could be caused to neighbours.

The majority of apartment blocks are fitted with security doors, where access to the internal communal area is through a secure door entry system. Visitor access can be allowed through the door entry system within each apartment. In the interest of security, tenants and leaseholders should not knowingly allow access through the doors to anyone they do not know or who cannot provide official identification. Tenants and leaseholders should ensure they allow their visitors the appropriate access to the building. Action may be taken where visitors are allowed to repeatedly cause nuisance to neighbours by pressing the entry system. Security doors and fire doors must not be propped open.

Furthermore, tenants and leaseholders are responsible for the behaviour of visitors in the communal areas and in their apartments. They should ensure that visitors do not use abusive or offensive language, do not litter or graffiti communal areas, do not cause obstruction and keep noise to a minimum. This behaviour, if allowed to happen, will be considered in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Cross Tenure Policy and where relevant the Tenancy Agreement and action may be taken against the tenant or leaseholder accordingly.

Smoking or the use of e-cigarettes is not permitted within the communal areas of apartments blocks or sheltered housing blocks, including lifts. Tenants wishing to smoke or vape may do so within 5 metres of the building, avoiding entrance areas and having regard to other tenants within the accommodation. Disposal of used cigarettes should be done in an appropriate and safe manner, using disposal bins where these are provided. Where a tenant, leaseholder or their visitor causes an unnecessary sprinkler activation or fire service call out, they may be recharged accordingly.

6.4. CCTV and Security Lighting

SoTCC may choose to make use of Closed-Circuit TV (CCTV) technology to help improve the management of the building and security of tenants, leaseholders and visitors. Use of CCTV will be advertised in all areas where it is in use. Footage from CCTV may be used as evidence in any legal proceedings.

Security lighting may also be fitted within communal areas to support the safety of tenants, leaseholders and visitors. Where this is the case, it will be maintained in line with the Repairs & Maintenance Policy.

6.5. Graffiti and the Illegal Dumping of Waste

It is SoTCC's aim to keep all estates safe and clean so that people have a well-maintained neighbourhood that they can be proud of. SoTCC has a zero-tolerance stance on graffiti and the illegal dumping of waste (known as fly tipping) and will do everything in its powers to ensure it is removed and any offenders are dealt with as quickly as possible.

This policy applies to graffiti and fly tipping on HRA communal land and areas only.

Graffiti can cause damage to property, be unpleasant to look at and in some cases be distressing to the community. Therefore, graffiti that is considered racist or offensive will be removed within 24 hours after being reported. All other graffiti will be removed within 5 full working days of it being reported. For more information on service standards please see section 12.

The illegal dumping of waste is a crime that blights our communities, it is unsightly, can be hazardous and can lead to injuries both to the public and wildlife and is costly to remove. Therefore, rubbish that is dumped and is deemed a health and safety hazard will be removed within 24 hours of it being reported. All other dumped rubbish will be removed within 5 full working days of it being reported. Legal action can be taken against householders whose waste is tipped illegally (whether they know about it or not), which can lead to a fine or imprisonment for those found guilty of fly tipping. For information on how to dispose of rubbish correctly and safely, please visit the SoTCC website: https://www.stoke.gov.uk/info/20002/rubbish_and_recycling

6.6. Litter and Dog Fouling Enforcement

Keeping the estates clean is an important factor in contributing to safety, the environment and being proud of the local area. Littering and failing to clear up dog foul are both illegal. SoTCC will proactively work to raise awareness to prevent littering and dog fouling on the estates, particularly where complaints are received. This includes conducting talks in schools, using lamp post stickers and stencils on the pathways. Where a person is witnessed by a SoTCC officer committing an offence, SoTCC will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. This could also be treated as a breach of the tenancy conditions.

6.7. Environmental Improvements

SoTCC may undertake specific works to an estate, a small area within an estate or a small number of properties as part of improving the wider environment of the estate or as part of the planned investment programme. These works may be undertaken to facilitate better use of the space, resolve local issues, reduce anti-social behaviour, improve security or facilitate better community integration.

SoTCC will endeavour to provide a small amount of funding from the HRA on an annual basis for Neighbourhood Environmental Improvement Schemes and invite bids for funding from local communities. Local communities will be encouraged to develop ideas for improvements to their local area working with SoTCC officers, the police, the fire service or other local stakeholders. Eligible works can include (but are not limited to);

- fencing
- paving

- tree removal
- security lighting

Bids will be considered by a panel of tenants for approval. More information on the scheme and how to access it can be provided by SoTCC staff. Details of schemes completed under this programme will be published annually.

6.8. Management of Land Owned by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Across the housing estates, SoTCC owns and manages a large number of small plots of land and open space. These areas should not be used for parking unless they are specifically designated as a car-park and maintained as such. SoTCC will keep the land clear from rubbish and waste where it is practicable to do so and where it has not been decided that this area will become naturalised.

Street inspections will be carried out by Estate Officers and involve inspecting all streets where there are HRA properties, land and pathways. The street inspections will also include maintaining footpaths that are on HRA land which are not the responsibility of the Highway Authority. Routine visual inspections of footpaths will take place to ensure they are accessible and well maintained. Any issues will be actioned or reported as appropriate.

Therefore, the inspections will look for any:

- graffiti
- fly tipping
- litter
- drug paraphernalia
- overgrown vegetation
- street lighting
- trip hazards e.g. uneven slabs
- health & safety issues
- untidy gardens
- dangerous structures

SoTCC will carry out activities where there is HRA land or properties which support the overall maintenance and safety of the estates. Where there are HRA sites that have shops located on them, these will be maintained through an inspection schedule. Where a SoTCC property is vacant for an extended period of time, SoTCC will visit the property to ensure it is safe and secure and that the gardens are kept in a clean and tidy condition.

SoTCC open space which is defined as under the ownership of the Housing Revenue Account (as opposed to the wider council's General Fund) is maintained by

the Housing Department through funds drawn from the rent roll and/or general service/amenity charges.

6.9. Communal Gardens and Pathways

SoTCC will undertake scheduled inspections of communal gardens and pathways (e.g. in bungalow complexes and sheltered housing schemes) to ensure that the estates are safe, clean and well-maintained. SoTCC will carry out any necessary work as part of a planned programme.

6.10. Garages

Lock Up Garages

In addition to the housing stock, SoTCC owns and manages a number of lock up garages within the HRA. They are offered on a licence agreement to residents and as such the resident has no right to buy and there is no right of assignment or succession.

Garage licensees may be offered a garage on the same site or another local site if their garage is considered to be uneconomical to repair or the site is suitable for an alternative use (see the Repairs and Maintenance Policy for more information on repairs to lock up garages). SoTCC is not responsible for replacement locks to garages as a result of lost keys. Upon termination of the license agreement, the resident is responsible for clearing any items or belongings to ensure that the garage is suitable to re-let.

Garage Plots

SoTCC own a number of garage plot sites across the city where residents can lease a plot from SoTCC for an annual fee. On these sites the leaseholder can erect their own garage. They have full responsibility for the repairs, security and maintenance of the garage, and removal of the garage on termination of the lease. If this is not done, SoTCC may take steps to do so, having served the appropriate notice, and recharge the former leaseholder for any costs incurred.

Garage sites which are either underutilised, in poor state or repair, the scene of repeated anti-social behaviour and/or present a development opportunity may be decommissioned, demolished or sold.

6.11. Gritting

This policy applies only to property and land within the ownership and management of the HRA. Therefore, the gritting of adopted public roads and pavements are dealt with separately by SoTCC's Highways Department.

During times of severe winter weather (icy or snowy conditions) SoTCC will take reasonable actions to grit or clear snow from the main communal entrances, paths or access roads to some locations. There is no legal obligation to grit or clear areas due to snow and ice and therefore residents should not rely on this service being available. At these times, the Estate Officers can suspend their normal duties in order to lay grit and clear snow. However, there are insufficient staffing resources to provide this service to every location, so gritting and snow clearance is prioritised and resources allocated to reflect higher priority areas first. Priority will be given to grit communal paths or entrances on housing land locations where there are particular access difficulties or high concentrations of elderly tenants, such as Sheltered Housing Schemes. SoTCC is unable to preventatively grit ahead of any forecast severe weather nor provide repeat cycles of clearances/gritting.

Extreme weather conditions may prevent staff from accessing locations and so SoTCC would be unable to take action to clear or grit communal paths. The provision of gritting and snow clearance will only take place during office hours. No service can usually be provided out of hours, at weekends or during holiday periods (such as Christmas).

It is the tenant's responsibility to clear individual paths or drives where they live in houses or bungalows. There are a small number of grit bins on housing land – these provide grit for both Estate Officers and residents to use themselves (depending on available stock and budget). The use of these by residents is at their own risk.

6.12. Trees

Trees are an important part of the environment and the landscape of the estates. Therefore, SoTCC will try to conserve trees where possible and only carry out work in certain circumstances. Following an assessment, work will only be carried out to a tree that is:

- Dead
- Dying
- Dangerous
- Diseased

However, SoTCC is aware that even trees within these criteria are at varying levels of severity and deteriorate at different rates. Therefore, each decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, looking at the overall condition of the tree, its location and surroundings, with the final decision being made based on whether the tree poses an unacceptable or intolerable risk.

Checks are carried out through the Planning Portal to establish whether the tree is within a Conservation Area or has a Tree Preservation Order, and where necessary the relevant permission is sought before any work is begun.

If the tree is within a tenant's garden, they will be given assistance with minor pruning if they are considered to be vulnerable or have health issues, where it is practicable to do so. More specialist pruning or larger works may be conducted by a contractor on behalf of SoTCC, following approval.

7. Financial Implications

The costs for delivering this policy are accounted for within the HRA and associated 30 Year Business Plan. Tenants directly fund some costs through the application of service and facility charges and leaseholders through service charges.

8. Consultation

This policy has been further developed in conjunction with officers and tenants through the Estate Management Group.

9. Complaints

SoTCC actively encourages all customer feedback about its services, and uses complaints, comments and compliments to review and improve our services.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by SoTCC, its own staff or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

If a customer is dissatisfied with a service that has been provided, they can make contact via:

- SoTCC's formal Complaints Procedure. Details are available from any SoTCC office or online [Comment on a council service Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- Email at – customer.feedback@stoke.gov.uk
- Telephone – 01782 234234
- Message via social media – Facebook / Twitter

The customer has the right to challenge the response to their complaint via the appeals process. Further information on how complaints are processed can be found in SoTCC's Compliments, Comments & Complaints Procedure.

SoTCC will never unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the Complaints Procedure. If a complaint is refused escalation, we will explain the clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action and also set out the customer's right to take this decision to the Housing Ombudsman.

10. Safeguarding

There is a formal framework in place for identifying, reporting and recording safeguarding issues. Staff employed by SoTCC and by external contractors have all had relevant safeguarding training and this will be refreshed on an annual basis.

11. Links to Other Policies

This policy forms part of a wider policy framework relating to the operation of HRA services. This policy is aligned to, and should be considered with the following key documents:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Cross Tenure Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Leaseholder Policy
- Individual Leases
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Void Management Policy

12. Monitoring Performance and Reporting

To ensure the content of this policy is being delivered in practice, it is important to have performance measures in place. Overall estates performance is managed by the Head of Housing Management and further reported to the Director of Housing Management as part of SoTCC's Strategic Performance Framework.

The Housing Service Standards set out the level of service tenants can expect to receive from SoTCC. There are a number of these that specifically relate to estate management:

- We will inspect communal areas within apartment blocks at least once a week.
- We will inspect and maintain HRA communal land and areas
- We will remove rubbish which is deemed a health and safety hazard within 24 hours of it being reported to us
- We will remove all other dumped rubbish from HRA communal land and areas within 5 full working days of it being reported to us
- We will remove racist or offensive graffiti from HRA communal land and areas within 24 hours of it being reported to us
- We will remove all other graffiti from HRA communal land and areas within 5 full working days of it being reported to us
- We will clean the communal areas of all apartment blocks that are above 2 storeys and sheltered housing schemes, in line with the agreed schedule for that building

Performance against these standards will be reported to the Tenant Voice and will be available on the SoTCC website.

Starting in 2024 all social landlords are required to report and submit Tenant Satisfaction Measure data to the Regulator of Social Housing on an annual basis. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures form a series of questions asked of tenants to gain their views of SoTCC as a landlord. The questions included in this survey that relate to estate management are:

- TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained
- TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

Performance against these measures are a key part of the performance framework. They are routinely reported through Operational Business Meetings to relevant senior managers and through a monthly Tenant Satisfaction meeting which focuses on how services can be improved based on the results. A key part of these measures is ensuring tenants can hold SoTCC to account, therefore performance against these measures will also be reported to the Tenant Voice and will be available on the SoTCC website.

Where the Tenant Voice feel an area is underperforming, they are able to commission a scrutiny exercise where a group of tenants and leaseholders will look more closely at a service to outline what works well and give recommendations on how it could be improved. To get involved or find out more, please email Housing.Engagement@stoke.gov.uk

13. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is consistent with changes in legislation and regulation.

As standard, the policy will be reviewed at 5 yearly intervals.

Key Contacts

For comments in relation to this policy and its development please contact the Regulatory and Strategic Services Team:

- Email: housing.strategy@stoke.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01782 234234 (office hours only)

Do you require this document in another format or language?

To request this document in any other accessible format such as large print or Braille, please contact the Tenant Relations Team:

- Telephone: 01782 234234 (office hours only)
- Email: housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk
- Post: Tenant Relations Team, Floor 3, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 1HH.

You can translate this policy into any language by saving it to a device and then uploading it to Google's document Translation service.

If you would like further information on how to translate a document or how to influence policy development, please contact the Tenant Relations Team using the contact details provided above.

Glossary/Definitions

Throughout this policy document, it is inevitable that words or phrases are used that are readily understood by some readers, but which are new to other readers and their meaning is not immediately apparent. The meaning of some words/phrases used in this document is given below:

Apartment – otherwise referred to as a ‘flat,’ is a set of rooms forming an individual residence, typically on one floor and which when put together with multiple other apartments / flats, typically makes up a larger building known as an apartment block or flat block.

Breach – refers to the tenant breaking one of the terms or conditions of their tenancy agreement.

Estate – an area where there are a large group of homes owned by SoTCC.

Communal Areas – areas inside and outside of a building to which all tenants and leaseholders have equal access. For example: stairs, lifts, bin stores and parking areas.

Garage Plot – a small piece of land which residents can lease from SoTCC for an annual fee, to put their own garage on.

Hazard / hazardous – anything that is potentially dangerous, flammable, combustible or unsafe.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – a ring fenced financial account for managing and maintaining local authority council homes.

Lease - a contract between a resident (the leaseholder) and SoTCC (the freeholder) which specifies the terms and conditions of the resident occupying and using the property.

Leaseholder – In this document, means a council tenant who has purchased their flat under the Right To Buy scheme or a person who has purchased an ex-council flat and SoTCC is the freeholder.

Lock Up Garage – a garage owned by SoTCC that residents can rent for a weekly charge, on a licence agreement.

Neighbourhood – the surrounding geographical area and community of a property or an estate.

No right of assignment or succession – in relation to garages in this document, the license agreement cannot be passed on to someone else during the lifetime or after the death of the licensee.

Planned Programme – work that has been identified in advance and scheduled in to be completed alongside other work in a coordinated way.

Regulator of Social Housing – a public body that regulates registered providers of social housing (including SoTCC as a local authority landlord). They set standards which social landlords are required to meet and will carry out inspections to ensure compliance.

Sheltered Housing Scheme - a block of apartments offering “independent living” but within the scheme, there is typically communal facilities such as a resident’s lounge, kitchen, laundry and activity space. The schemes are for people over the age of 55 with low level support needs and who want to feel secure in their own home. There are staff on site to offer an enhanced housing related support service during normal office hours and 24-hour support provided by the SoTCC’s lifeline service. It is important to note that these schemes do not offer a residential care service, residents live independently or with support from a specific care provider.

Tenancy Agreement – a contract between tenant and landlord which specifies the terms and conditions of renting the property.

Zero-tolerance – will not be allowed in any circumstance.