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**Pet Ownership Factsheet**

If you are thinking of keeping a pet, this Factsheet provides a summary of our Pets Policy. This should be read in conjunction with our Pets Application Form.

**Applying to keep a pet**

Before you think about keeping a pet in your home, we would ask you to first seek permission from us. We recognise the benefits a pet can bring to those living alone, however due to the design, some schemes have restrictions on what pets can be kept, so permission may not always be granted.

We will allow applications for assistance dogs and carefully consider applications where a medical practitioner has recommended a dog for therapeutic reasons.

We may consider special permission to keep a pet within a scheme with a shared area where we are confident that responsible pet ownership is being demonstrated in respect of the use of our shared areas and the impact on neighbouring properties. We would only consider granting permission for a cat which became a ‘house cat’ within apartments as it cannot be allowed to roam freely in communal areas.

We would also need to check you would have arrangements in place with family or friends to care for a pet if you were taken into hospital or was away on holiday etc.

A home visit may be carried out as part of our assessment and we will let you have our decision in writing with 28 days of receiving your completed application. If you have been selected for one of our empty homes, or you are purchasing a lease and already have a pet, you will need to complete the application process prior to any offer of accommodation or purchase of a lease.

We will ask you to complete a Pet permission application which will give us lots of information about the pet you require to keep and its care.

**Reviewing an application**

So we can judge each request on its individual merits, we will take into account the following when reviewing an application:

* Your accommodation and the facilities available to you
* Whether you have access to a garden or open space nearby
* In the case of a dog, the breed, size and temperament in relation to the accommodation you occupy, or the in the case of an applicant, whether the property being offered would be suitable.
* Whether you have somebody who can care for your pet in the event of an emergency such as a hospital admission or ill health.
* How often you will leave the pet alone and what arrangements you will make for its care whilst you are away.
* Whether the pet may cause a nuisance or risk to anyone in the immediate locality.
* Your ability to pay for vet care, vaccinations, treatments and in the case of a dog that you will undertake any necessary training needed to prevent nuisance such as excessive barking, chewing/scratching or isolation when left unattended.
* If you wish to keep any exotic pets, whether you have the expertise to and adequate knowledge to meet the care and welfare of that pet.

**Granting permission to keep a pet**

Permission will always be granted for assistance dogs, such as guide dogs, hearing dogs or other assistance dogs trained for specific medical needs, e.g. epilepsy, provided that your home has been assessed as suitable by the organisation providing the dog. Any requests to keep a retired service dog will be reviewed on a case by case basis taking their ability to keep to the other conditions set out in this policy.

Permission ***will not*** be granted for the following:

* dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, such as Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentina, Fila Brazeliero
* farm animals - for example, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, cockerels, ducks
* rats, mice, gerbils, and hamsters if they are unsuitable for either the environment in which they live or the accommodation provided
* rabbits and guinea pigs
* animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 - examples of animals registered under the Act are certain types of venomous snake, certain types of spider and various breeds of monkey
* endangered species, such as certain birds of prey
* certain breeds of reptiles that are unsuitable for the size of the property
* where there is an on-going problem with pet ownership in the household or there has been a problem in the past.

Permission ***will not normally*** be granted for the following:

* a dog or a cat where the resident lives in an apartment particularly where there is no direct access to a garden or open space or where there are extensive carpeted internal communal areas. Residents living in an apartment must be able to show how they can demonstrate to us responsible pet ownership and avoid potential nuisance to other residents as a result of the design and layout of their home.
* a dog or a cat where the household lives in an extra care scheme, unless any such application is emphatically supported by Lincolnshire County Council Adult Social Care and the needs of the pet are included within any care plan, including responsibility in emergencies such as ill health or hospitalisation.
* if permission is granted to keep a dog or a cat in an apartment, this will be limited to one dog or one house cat and will also take into consideration the size of the apartment.
* a cat that has not been neutered.

Permission will normally be granted with the following conditions:

* residents must not keep a pet without our prior written consent
* residents must have arrangements in place for a pet to be cared for, in the event of an emergency, i.e. hospital admission / ill health
* a pet must not cause nuisance to neighbours, staff and visitors. This includes noise nuisance
* a pet must not cause damage to the property or communal areas and residents may be charged for any damage caused to our property
* residents cannot run a business from their home, this includes breeding animals for sale or boarding kennels
* residents must pay for any additional measures or other forms of restrictions that are required to keep their pet safe, under control, and unable to access anyone else’s property. Our permission is required for carrying out such work
* residents must meet the care and welfare needs of their pet. In the case of dogs and cats this includes worming and regular flea treatment in accordance with veterinary guidelines. From time to time we may ask residents for proof that these treatments have been carried out
* whilst in a public place, dogs must be kept on a lead and wear a collar displaying the owner’s name and address
* a dog should not be allowed to access and use internal communal areas of a scheme but should be restricted for purpose of promptly entering and exiting the scheme only.
* A dog should be exercised on a lead outside of the communal areas of the scheme, and should be supervised and kept under control at all times
* residents must be able to demonstrate the ability and commitment to pick up dog faeces and place in a dog bin or a bin that allows the disposal of dog waste. Dog faeces should not be left for any period of time; this includes any dog faeces in their own enclosed garden
* a dog should not be chained or tethered on any of our land
* a dog should not be left alone for long periods of time
* residents should by law have their dog permanently identified by being microchipped
* a cat will need a litter tray which should be regularly cleaned and its contents disposed of appropriately. Animal waste / cat litter trays must not be left in communal areas
* a cat should not be allowed to roam around internal communal areas. Permission will only be given for a housecat if the resident lives in an apartment. A cat that is only kept indoors will need mental and physical stimulation. To stop the cat from scratching furniture or the property, a suitable facility, such as a scratching post should be provided.
* caged birds should be able to outstretch their wings in all directions and with adequate perching space

Cats are by nature free roaming and cat owners have no control over their toileting arrangements. It is for this reason we only grant permission for house cats in apartments. In addition, many of our schemes are surrounded by residential dwellings where cats will be roaming onto our communal spaces. We will not therefore respond or investigate complaints regarding any cats fouling in external communal areas.

We may refer to a specialist website or agency for advice on good practice on keeping specific pets. However, as responsible pet owners, residents would be expected to have researched this, and included relevant details within their application.

We may withdraw consent if a nuisance is caused.