



ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy describes how Almond Housing Association Limited (AHA Ltd.) will ensure that our physical assets, i.e. our properties, are built to high standards, well maintained and kept in good and safe repair, both for the benefit of existing tenants and to maximise the long term life of each property and its value to the association.
- 1.2 This policy is supported by a comprehensive set of procedures (*see Appendix 1*).
- 1.3 In implementing this policy, AHA Ltd.'s objectives are to:
 - comply at all times with all legal requirements, codes of good practice and Scottish Government guidance relating to the building and maintenance of our properties;
 - assist in fulfilling the aims of West Lothian Council's housing strategy, as detailed in their current Strategic Housing Investment Plan, and the Scottish Government's priorities for the area, by providing housing for general and particular needs, including accommodation to assist in the care of the elderly residents of West Lothian;
 - provide a prompt, economic and efficient reactive repairs service, including an out-of-hours emergency service;
 - establish and maintain a comprehensive and systematic programme of cyclical and planned maintenance;
 - achieve the current housing standards set by the Scottish Government, for all properties;
 - allocate work only to design teams and contractors who are competent, financially sound and can achieve the standards required;
 - achieve high standards of customer care and satisfaction by monitoring contractors' performance regularly and enabling tenants to comment on the work undertaken;
 - provide a 'value for money' service by seeking competitive quotes or tenders for all contract work, in accordance with our policy on Procurement of Goods & Services and/or by developing 'partnering' arrangements with contractors who are able to deliver a high standard of service;
 - ensure that all internal procedures supporting this policy are clear, comprehensive and available to all employees, enabling a consistent approach to the management, implementation and budget-setting for all aspects of our repairs and maintenance service.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Board of Management

- To ensure that there is in place an Asset Management policy which complies with all current legislation, regulations, guidance and good practice, and also with our current Asset Management Strategy;
- To approve the overall budget for asset management as part of the annual budget-setting process;
- To monitor performance against agreed standards, progress against agreed timetables and expenditure against budget.

2.2 Management

Chief Executive: To ensure that the policy is communicated to all employees and applied consistently.

Head of Asset Management: To implement the policy and supporting procedures on a day-to-day basis, and to manage the asset management services.

Head of Housing Management: To sign off the housing need statement in support of development grant funding, and to ensure that Housing Management staff implement those aspects of the policy and supporting procedures delegated to them.

2.3 Employees

To ensure that they have read and understood this policy and relevant supporting procedures, that they comply with them and meet all current standards etc. as required according to their day-to-day duties.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 In developing our new build plans and proposals, AHA Ltd. will consult as appropriate with statutory authorities, agencies, local representatives, voluntary or charitable organisations etc., and will refer to available data, reports etc. on housing need in West Lothian.
- 3.2 AHA Ltd. will incorporate the relevant elements of the Sustainability Policy in all new developments, and will carry out a full risk assessment before embarking on a new build project.
- 3.3 AHA Ltd. will seek to maximise the opportunities for developing new housing through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) and will also examine the potential and suitability of other funding and innovative funding packages, as these are developed and approved for use by housing associations.
- 3.4 Where development proposals require grant funding, AHA Ltd. will submit bids to the funding bodies in the format prescribed by them and according to their timetables.
- 3.5 AHA Ltd. will examine and where appropriate implement alternatives to developing sites on their own, for example joint ventures with other Housing Associations such as the West Lothian Development Alliance, joint partnerships with other organisations and/or agency agreements.

4.0 REACTIVE REPAIRS

4.1 The term *reactive repairs* covers all routine 'breakdown' repairs causing inconvenience or a safety risk that are reported by a tenant, factored owner or an employee, including repairs identified during the inspection of a void property.

4.2 Reactive repairs are prioritised according to their urgency, with a maximum set response time for each category, defined as a number of hours (emergency repairs) or working days (all other repairs), which are approved by the Board and publicised through the information provided to new tenants, our website and our newsletter *Almond View*. The current target times for non-void repairs are:

- Emergency (serious risk to safety or health): 1 hour
- Emergency (all other emergencies): 6 hours
- Urgent: 3 days
- Routine: 10 days
- Inspect: 5 days
- Planned: 30 days

The current target times for void repairs are: 2, 5, 10 or 15 days depending on the type of repair.

4.3 An *emergency* is defined as a problem which is a threat to life or property, i.e. it is a problem that may compromise the health, safety or security of the tenant and their household, or the security or integrity of the property.

Outwith office hours tenants will have access to an Emergency Service telephone number so that emergency repairs may be dealt with. Unless there is a specific health need, we will not carry out heating system repairs after 10pm. An employee will also be 'on call' should the out of hours' service require advice or instruction.

4.4 A *complex* repair is one where the target timescale may not be achieved because:

- special or bespoke materials such as windows or doors are required, and these are only supplied by a specific manufacturer with a long manufacture and/or delivery period, or
- specialist work is required which requires further investigation, such as dampness, an invasive structural repair, telecommunications, drainage faults that require extensive excavations, or
- the repair is a one-off major component repair or replacement that is subject to AHA Ltd.'s quotation or tender rules, for example the replacement of a property's roof covering or repairs that involve utility companies (electricity, gas and water).

Complex repairs are not included in the calculations for 'right first time' performance monitoring.

4.5 We will offer appointments, normally by arrangement with the tenant and according to the appropriate timescale for the category of repair. It is expected that the tenant will be available during the agreed period as we or the contractor do not make contact in advance of the contractor arriving. Where tenants seek an appointment outwith the target timescale of the repair then that repair will be given the priority code relevant to the appointment that has been made, e.g. if an appointment for what would be an emergency repair is agreed for the next day then this will be coded as a routine repair, not an emergency.

- 4.6 Where clarification of the problem is required, a repair will be inspected prior to arranging for work to be carried out, in accordance with current guidance and procedures.
- 4.7 A percentage of completed repairs will be inspected as part of AHA Ltd.'s monitoring of contractors' performance, including, prior to the payment of invoices, inspection of any repair where the cost is above the limit currently set in the procedures.

Re-chargeable repairs

- 4.8 AHA Ltd. will charge the tenant, former tenant, or any other party involved, with the costs of repairs required due to the carelessness, neglect or deliberate damage by a tenant, a member of their household or a visitor etc.
- 4.9 A sympathetic approach will however be taken to minor repairs which would normally be charged to the tenant, where the tenant is elderly, physically or mentally impaired (i.e. having a clinically diagnosed illness or disability), is otherwise frail or there are other relevant circumstances, including situations covered by the Vulnerable Tenants Strategy and related policies.

Right to repair

- 4.10 We will publicise and comply with the Scottish Government's 'Right to Repair' scheme, for those reactive repairs currently covered by that Scheme.

5.0 CYCLICAL & PLANNED MAINTENANCE, MAJOR REPAIRS

Cyclical maintenance

- 5.1 We will carry out the following cyclical maintenance programmes:
- Cyclical painting – the external painting of windows and doors (or washing of pvc frames), the internal painting of communal areas in blocks of flats, and the cleaning and painting where required of external rainwater gutters and downpipes, carried out under a planned programme covering every property over a five year period.
 - Gas servicing – the annual inspection of all gas appliances installed in AHA Ltd. properties, including all gas supply pipework, to comply with our legal obligations as a registered social landlord.
 - Smoke & CO detectors – the annual inspection of smoke and CO detectors and replacement of batteries.
 - Thermostatic Mixer valves – the annual check of all thermostatic mixer valves fitted by AHA Ltd., to ensure that the flow of water is maximised and that hot water is delivered at a safe temperature.
 - Any other work, such as the inspection and cleaning of gutters, carried out at a prescribed interval in order to maintain the function of an item at its optimum level.

We will continually review the performance of our properties to identify any other areas of cyclical work required.

Planned maintenance

- 5.2 Planned Maintenance is the replacement of items in a building which have come to the end of their useful life, where the replacement can be predicted and planned for and where the new items are either of a similar or higher standard. The purpose of the programme is to obtain full value from AHA Ltd.'s properties by ensuring that the life of each property is maximised.
- 5.3 The current condition of building components and finishes will be assessed through:
- a stock condition survey carried out every 5 years by an external consultant,
 - a programme of continual stock surveying carried out internally,
 - regular analysis of expenditure on reactive repairs and major repairs.
- 5.4 The results will be incorporated into an ongoing programme of planned maintenance or improvement works, broken down into annual sections for approval by the Board each year. Funding proposals will be submitted to the Board for inclusion in the annual budget-setting process. The Board may amend the proposed programme by bringing forward or delaying particular elements of work.
- 5.5 The stock condition survey results will also feed into the 30-year Business Plan and provide estimates of the costs of future maintenance requirements.

Major Repairs

- 5.6 Major repairs is the work required to bring a property up to an acceptable standard due to the failure of a building component outwith any planned programme. This may include work which was not carried out when planned, e.g. due to access issues.

We will where possible seek to avoid carrying out separate major repairs, and will assess such works to identify if they can be added to an existing planned programme, to achieve better value for money.

6.0 CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTORS & CONTRACTS

- 6.1 AHA Ltd. will not maintain formal lists of Approved Consultants or Contractors for asset management services. The selection and appointment process for individual contracts will be carried out in accordance with our current *Procurement of Goods & Services policy*.
- 6.2 AHA Ltd. will ensure that all contract documentation is robust, detailing the work that is required to enable, as far as is appropriate, a defined budget requirement for the project and a project which is low risk.
- 6.3 AHA Ltd. will treat all contractors and consultants with fairness and will adhere to any contract conditions. We will not expect any party to work at risk as this is not considered to be sustainable and will negatively impact any small businesses. We will seek to develop a partnering culture in our working relationships with contractors.
- 6.4 AHA Ltd. will implement measures to reduce or eliminate if possible the risk of contractor insolvency, and, if a contractor becomes insolvent, to minimise the financial consequences, inconvenience and disruption both to the business and to existing and prospective tenants.

7.0 ADAPTATIONS

- 7.1 An annual bid to the Scottish Government will be made for Aids & Adaptations funding. Subject to the receipt of funding and any allocations made from AHA Ltd.'s own funds, appropriate modifications will be carried out to individual properties to enable individuals with specific needs to live as independently as possible.

Where external or internal funding is not available we will not proceed with adaptations.

- 7.2 Adaptations will be carried out on a first come first served basis, with the exception of any low priority adaptations, which will be held until the last quarter of the year and only carried out should funding be available.

Only works specified on the referral or directly related to the requirements set out in the referral will be carried out.

- 7.3 We will accept referrals from any party that complies with the requirements of the grant funding including GP's, specialists in loss of hearing or sight etc.

We will accept self-referrals for minor works, as long as the process set out in the procedure is followed.

8.0 TENANT ALTERATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

- 8.1 Tenants may apply for written permission to carry out alterations or improvements to their property. Permission will normally be granted, subject to the proposed work complying with all current statutory requirements and also with AHA Ltd.'s current conditions and standards. Where an alteration will negatively impact other tenants, we will refuse the application.

- 8.2 A tenant who has carried out an approved improvement may, when giving notice that they wish to terminate their tenancy, apply for a compensatory payment where the work carried out is to be left, benefiting both the property and the incoming tenant.

9.0 TENANT PARTICIPATION & FEEDBACK

Consultation

- 9.1 Through the consultation arrangements established under the Tenant Participation Policy and Strategy, AHA Ltd. will give tenants the opportunity to comment on this policy when it is being reviewed, and on any individual procedures that have a direct impact on tenants, when these are being drafted and/or reviewed.

- 9.2 For relevant planned works, e.g. replacement of kitchen fitments, AHA Ltd. will give the tenants directly involved the opportunity to make appropriate choices, e.g. of colours or types of kitchen fitments, as this relates to their homes.

- 9.3 AHA Ltd. will liaise closely with the tenants involved over the arrangements for carrying out individual contracts, e.g. of cyclical painting, planned maintenance etc. We undertake to give tenants 1 year's notice of any work planned to their properties, to give them sufficient time to consider any redecoration works that they may wish to undertake.

Tenant Satisfaction

- 9.4 For reactive repairs AHA Ltd. will give all tenants and factored owners the opportunity to comment on the standard of the work carried out by sending them a copy of the works order incorporating a 'satisfaction slip', each time a repair is ordered.
- 9.5 AHA Ltd. will conduct surveys of new tenants following the occupation of new-build properties, and of the tenants involved following completion of contracts for planned maintenance works.
- 9.6 AHA Ltd. will conduct a general survey of all of all current tenants on the overall standards of the repairs and maintenance service, normally as part of a wider Tenant Satisfaction Survey undertaken approximately every 3 years.

10.0 OWNERS

General

- 10.1 AHA Ltd. will ensure that relevant information about any substantial work planned to tenanted properties is provided to owners of neighbouring properties.

Mutual owners/Factored properties

- 10.2 Owners of properties for which AHA Ltd. provides a factoring service will pay for their share of reactive repairs, cyclical and planned maintenance according to their responsibilities as specified in their Title Deeds, or under the Tenement Management Scheme where the title Deeds are not clear.
- 10.3 We will aim to advise owners about potential substantial works to their property at the earliest possible opportunity. This may mean that owners are advised of works that do not then proceed. Care will be taken to ensure that our communications are clear.

11.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 11.1 The performance of all consultants and contractors will be monitored as specified in the terms and conditions of their appointments or contracts, and as detailed in the procedures supporting this policy, to ensure we provide value for money for tenants and that our services meet the requirements of our tenants in terms of quality of service, design and structure.

12.0 COMPLAINTS

- 12.1 All comments and complaints concerning AHA Ltd.'s asset management services will be dealt with in accordance with the *Complaints policy* and the supporting procedures.

13.0 CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION

- 13.1 In implementing this policy AHA Ltd. will comply with the requirements of current data legislation, both with regard to the processing of personal information (data) within the organisation and in the sharing of that information with contractors, including ensuring that the required agreements and protocols covering the sharing of data with third parties are in place. For further details see the *Openness & Confidentiality policy*.

14.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 14.1 The Head of Asset Management is responsible for ensuring that reports on the following are submitted to the Senior Management Team and the Board according to current frequencies and reporting arrangements:
- the performance of repairs contractors and the annual gas servicing programme;
 - the progress of individual new build, cyclical and planned maintenance projects.
- 14.2 The Head of Asset Management will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Board at least every five years.

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[Note: This policy merges and replaces the previously separate policies on Aids & Adaptations, Asbestos-Containing Materials, Development, Partnering, Reactive Repairs, Cyclical & Planned Maintenance, Contractor insolvency, Shared Equity, Tenant Alterations & Improvements.]

APPENDIX 1**ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY****RELATED PROCEDURES**

Aids & Adaptations

Appointing Consultants & Contactors

Asbestos Containing Materials

Assessment of Housing Need

Business Continuity – Asset Management

Contract Management

Contractor Insolvency

Gas Safety

Heating Breakdowns – Temporary Heating & Compensation

Invoice Processing

New Build Properties - Handover

New Build (Almond Properties) – Defects Liability

New Build (WLDA Partner Landlord Properties) – Defects Liability

Partnering

Performance Monitoring

Planned Maintenance, Improvements & Major Repairs

Purchasing Properties on the Open Market & Mortgage to Rent

Quality Control

Reactive Repairs

Rechargeable Repairs

Right to Repair

Shared Equity

SHQS & EESSH Database

Tenant Alterations & Improvements