

DERBY HOMES POLICY ON GRITTING

Report of the Director of Housing and Customer Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report explains how Derby Homes will deal with snow and ice. The attached policy explains what action tenants and leaseholders can expect.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That City Board notes the content of the report and approves the Policy which is attached as an appendix to the report.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 For many years Derby Homes, and the former Housing Department of the Council, has attempted to deal with snow and ice by using a combination of strategically placed grit bins and the use of Caretakers. The Caretakers know where the high risk locations are on our sheltered housing schemes and go out to spread grit when there is snow fall.
- 3.2 For the information of Board members, 'grit' in this context means a mixture of grit and rock salt which Derby Homes and the Council purchase and stockpile during the summer months.
- 3.3 We have had mild Winters with little or no snow for many years. However, last year we had an unusually cold Winter with considerable snowfall. Both the City Council and Derby Homes supplies of grit were exhausted. In addition, Derby Homes Caretakers were reduced in number due to sickness and annual leave. This meant that Derby Homes struggled to deal with all of the requests to clear snow and ice. The experience prompted a review of Derby Homes' procedures covering this and a requirement to put in place a written policy.
- 3.4 There are a number of requirements on Derby Homes, both as an employer and as a landlord, to take reasonable action in the event of snow and ice. In brief these are to
- carry out risk assessments
 - develop a policy
 - take reasonable and proportionate action.
- 3.5 Derby Homes works alongside Derby City Council Highways who is responsible for gritting public highways and adopted paths, some of which are close to those areas Derby Homes is responsible for.

- 3.6 Discussions have taken place with Vale, our grounds maintenance contractor. It would be possible for them to take on this work. However this would be expensive. We have made better preparations this year including ordering more grit, stocking up all grit bins in such a way that grit cannot be stolen and we have more caretakers available including 3 additional apprentices.
- 3.7 The Vale contract can be renegotiated for future years to include this work as routine rather than a one off call out payment. That would provide much better value for money. The need for this can be assessed in the Spring.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Initial consultation was held with 'SHOUT' representatives. There is no need for further consultation as the Policy codifies existing custom and practice. If a decision to involve a contractor is made in the future, then detailed consultation would be necessary particularly if there was a need to apply a local rental addition. This would also require agreement from the City Council.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

At the moment this is cost neutral. If we were to decide to involve a contractor there would be a cost attached. That may be containable within existing budgets, or there might be a need to apply a local rental addition.

6. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Derby Homes responsibility to its tenants and employees are governed by Health and Safety law and the Occupiers Liability Acts (1957/1984) which *'place a duty on employers and occupiers of premises to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard persons from known dangers or dangers that you should reasonably know of'*.
- 6.2 Section 3 of the Work Place and Welfare Regulations 1999 require every employer to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:
- the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
 - the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.
- 6.3 There is a misconception that Authorities can be sued if members of the public injure themselves slipping on a pavement, for example, that has been gritted. Some people have concluded that it is safer to do nothing. This has been raised in Parliament and current thinking is that provided the Authority has taken reasonable steps to ensure the safety of residents then no Court would uphold such a claim.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This Policy particularly impacts upon older and disabled people and aims to improve their safety.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Clearly this Policy is designed to clarify processes that ensure the safety of employees, tenants and leaseholders. Derby Homes has a general responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for this and specifically as explained in 6.1 and 6.2 above.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The application of a risk assessment matrix is explained within the attached Policy document at appendix 1.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report

- Personnel
- Environmental
- Health & Safety
- Risk
- Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org - Tel 01332 888520

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

Appendix 1

Derby Homes Gritting Policy

Derby Homes will maintain safe access to its offices and communal facilities for tenants wherever possible. Priority will be given areas of greatest risk to residents. This will be defined by the application of the following risk matrix.

Matrix to Prioritise Gritting		Likelihood of slip occurring		
		Low Flat and even surface	Medium Flat but uneven surface or slight slope and even surface	High Slight Slope and uneven surface or Steep Slope or External Steps
Severity of outcome		1	2	4
	Low Few vulnerable Residents 1	1	2	4
	Medium Some vulnerable Residents 2	2	4	8
	High All Vulnerable Residents – Cat 1 and 2 Schemes 4	4	8	16
	Overall Risk (Likelihood x Severity)	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH

Derby Homes has a legal obligation to protect its staff, so entrances to Derby Homes Offices are a priority. Secondly, those areas shown by the matrix as red, high priority will be treated next as a matter of priority. Finally we will endeavour to treat those areas identified as amber, medium priority.

The results of applying the matrix are shown below. This is a detailed list of where we will put down grit(a mixture of grit and salt which is referred to as 'grit') whenever possible. These areas have been treated for a number of years. If we have additional capacity it may be possible to treat other areas at the discretion of Housing Managers.

We won't normally clear snow apart from where this is necessary at entrances to Derby Homes Offices, and where not doing so would expose vulnerable residents to unacceptable risk. Our policy is as follows:

- To ensure safe access for staff to Derby Homes offices
- To treat paths and communal facilities that are defined as high risk when snow is forecasted, and when snow has fallen
- To treat paths and communal facilities that are defined as medium risk when snow is forecasted, and when snow has fallen whenever possible
- To assist residents where they are unable to clear snow themselves, and in circumstances where not clearing snow could put that resident at unacceptable risk.
- To provide and stock grit bins so that residents can help themselves to grit.

It needs to be understood that there are sometimes situations outside of Derby Homes capacity to respond. These could be:

- Periods of prolonged snow and ice combined with prolonged sub zero temperatures which exhaust Derby Homes and/or the City Council's stock of grit
- Extremely heavy and severe snow fall

In such circumstances we have to use common sense and respond as best we can. We would communicate with vulnerable residents and advise them on how to stay safe while taking whatever action we can. Such circumstances are outside the scope of a policy such as this and would be something Derby Homes Managers would deal with at the time by developing a special action plan.

Applicable Schemes and locations

- Category 2 sheltered schemes
- Category 1 schemes where communal paths exist.
- Derby Homes Offices
- Some entrances to flats
- Some groups of older persons bungalows and flats
- Sloped entrances to properties that have been installed as a disabled adaptation

Extent of Gritting

This will be defined by the operation of the risk matrix at each location, but in general this will be:

Category 1 and 2 Sheltered Schemes

- Footpaths from the main entrance to the road (Category 2)
- Footpath from common room to the road (Category 1)
- External steps.
- Paths to and from car parks
- Any paths with a slope

Elderly persons bungalows and flats

- Any paths with a slope
- External steps.

Blocks of Flats

- Entrances to flats that have a ramp, steep slope or steps

Disabled adaptations

- Any sloped entrances to individual homes that have been constructed as a disabled adaptation

Grit Bins

Grit bins will be provided on all sheltered housing schemes and older persons accommodation. Grit bins will be filled no later than the end of October each year and will be re-filled as necessary throughout the winter.

Derby Homes assumes that residents and their relatives will help keep communal areas clear of snow and ice near to their front doors and in other areas on schemes that we are not able to treat.

Sites to be treated

South Area

Site	Description
Filbert Walk	Entrance to common room and some sloped paths and steps
Garsdale Court	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Humber Close	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Watermeadow Road	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Eden Street	Communal sloped paths
Slaney Close	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Boyer Street	Entrance to common room and some sloped paths
Fairdene Court	Paths to common room
Inverary Close	Sloped area leading to the flats
Acorn Close	Paths to common room
Kestrel House	Paths to front entrance
Glengary Way	Paths to common room
Donington Close	Paths to common room
Slindon Croft	Paths to common room
Trevone Court	Some communal paths due to slopes
Crayford Road	Steps to flats above shops
Holbrook Road	Steps to flats above shops
St David's, St Claire's and St Swithin's close	Sloped communal paths to flats
Rauche Court	Sloped entrances to rear of flats
Louvain Road	Disabled ramp
Bretton Avenue	Communal paths

North Area

Site	Description
Rebecca House	Paths to entrances front and rear
Centurion Walk	Slope to common room
Colville Street	Slope to common room
Whitecross House	Slope to front door
Madeley Court	All communal paths due to slopes
Holly Court	Front of common room and sloped communal paths
Craddock Avenue	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Coniston Crescent	Entrance to common room and some sloped paths
Streatham Road	Paths to common room and adjacent area
Max Road	Slope to common room
Berrisford Close	Communal paths in front of bungalows due to slope
Oakleigh Avenue	Paths to common room
Prince Charles Avenue	Slopes and steps from maisonettes above shops

Derby Homes Offices	All entrances
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