

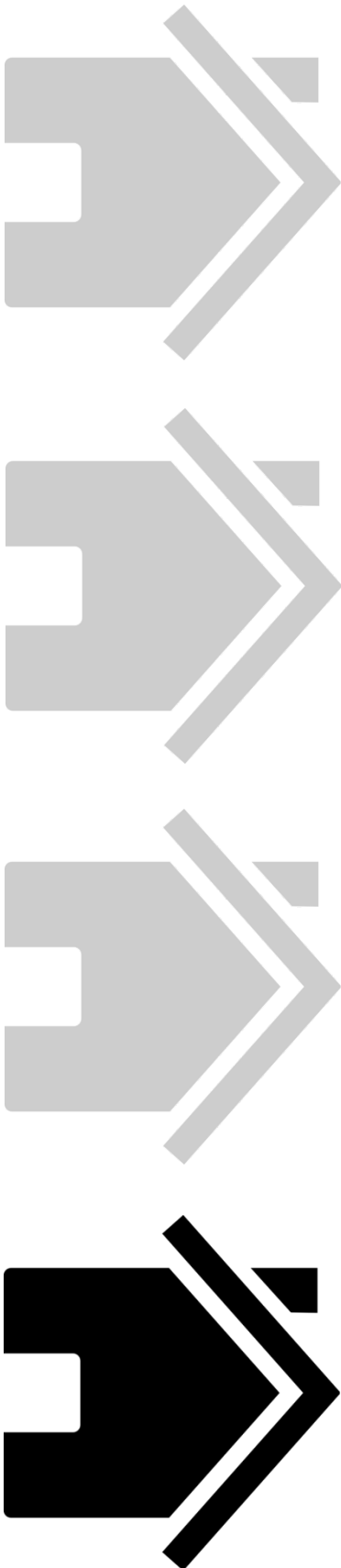


**Epping Forest
District Council**

Pet and Other Animal Policy

2025/26 to 2030/31

Housing and Property Services



FOREWORD

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), in our role as a registered social landlord, has a responsibility to enable all our tenants and leaseholders to enjoy their homes. We recognise that pets can be a great and supportive part of any household and that keeping animals for food is increasingly popular. We need to be sure that any animal is right for your home and that they will be well looked after. Tenants are responsible for their own behaviour and that of their household, their visitors and any pets or other animals that they may have or that may visit them. This policy aims to regulate the animals that tenants and leaseholders of EFDC may wish to keep at home or on other EFDC housing land in order to ensure the welfare of the animals and to prevent or minimise the impact on other residents.

There are some people who choose to keep animals, (e.g., chickens) for other purposes than as pets. This is not normally permitted by EFDC, the risks of infection, vermin and nuisance are too great to allow this at our properties. However, we will consider requests to keep any animals as pets or for other purposes at most of our properties. Residents in our Independent Living Schemes may not keep a cat or dog, they may be allowed to keep a caged bird or a similar pet.

Tenants who keep any animals at their home without permission, may be asked to rehome them and may be putting their tenancy with EFDC at risk.

Our Key Objectives and priorities

This policy came into force on [DATE OF CABINET APPROVAL] and supports the Corporate Plan ambition to maintain agile services that respond swiftly to the needs of our community and meets our aims of:

- *Stronger communities*
- *Stronger place*

This Policy also supports the Housing Strategy priorities of:

- *Ensuring quality, safety, and high standards*
- *Promoting health, wellbeing, and independence*
- *Protecting and enhancing the environment*

Delivering the Policy

This policy is supported by an application form and agreement. The current versions of these are at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. These will be amended from time to time, changes will be agreed by the relevant service Director.

A procedure note to guide officers in their decision on any application from tenants to keep an animal at their home or on other housing land will be produced. This procedure will be reviewed from time to time and approved by the relevant Head of Service.

Scope

This policy covers tenants who wish to keep any animal at their home, or in or on other EFDC housing land. It covers any animals that may be pets as well as animals that may be kept for other purposes. However, animals may not be kept for commercial purposes, egg production or other food supply.

Animals may only be kept as pets in EFDC housing properties and on EFDC housing land.

This policy intends to:

- Ensure that the welfare of animals is a priority for residents

- That national guidance and law is adhered to.

Before we can give permission, tenants must fill in a form requesting EFDC approval to keep any animals at home or on other EFDC housing land. This includes garages, gardens and any sheds or other outbuildings. The application form helps us make sure the pet or other animal is a good fit for the property.

Some of the criteria we check in the form include:

- if there are any relevant restrictions at home, via a tenancy agreement for example
- if there is likely to be any nuisance to neighbours
- if the animal(s) will have access to a garden

The policy applies to all tenures of housing owned by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), including leaseholders, tenants of leaseholders and EFDC tenants.

Definitions

- Pets – this includes any animal that is kept as a pet at an EFDC Housing property, whether it is allowed inside the home or kept in the garden or any other part of the property.
- Other animals – this includes any animal not being kept as a pet, e.g., chickens.
- Assistance animals – these are animals that disabled people need to live their daily lives. They are permitted in any of our homes, and EFDC should be notified that there is an assistance dog being kept at the property.¹

¹ This is mainly so that we can deal with an enquiries about an animal being kept at the property and support the household if possible.

Tenants

EFDC Housing's standard tenancy agreements include clauses relating to pets and this policy expands on the implementation and understanding of those clauses. The tenancy agreement will be reviewed to include a requirement that tenants must request permission for any pet or other animal to be kept by a tenanted household.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) clause of EFDC's standard tenancy agreement (as at February 2025) the following provision is included as an example of ASB:

“any nuisance or annoyance caused by pets including barking and fouling”

The section of the tenancy agreement specifically relating to pets, as at February 2025 is at Appendix 4 to this Policy.

Key aspects of this policy

- Households in a flat or maisonette without a garden, shared gardens do not count, may not be permitted to keep a dog or cat.
- No one is permitted to keep any animals in or on communal areas of EFDC Housing properties.
- EFDC will normally allow tenants and leaseholders to keep a small, caged bird or a small aquarium.
- EFDC will normally allow residents to keep small, caged animals usually kept as pets (examples include hamsters and guinea pigs).
- Tenants in our Independent Living Schemes are not permitted to keep any pet or other animal except, with permission, a small, caged bird or small aquarium.
- In some circumstances, and at the discretion of your Tenancy Officer, someone taking up a new tenancy may be allowed to keep a dog or cat without access to a garden. This will only be if the new tenant has a pet that they cannot rehome straight away. However, they may not be permitted to have another animal when the initial pet is rehomed or passes away.

- Insurance – all tenants who keep animals at their home are advised to obtain suitable insurance.
- Dangerous animals – no animals that are classified by law as dangerous will be permitted to be kept at EFDC housing properties.
- Dangerous dogs – the Council will not permit any tenant or lessee to keep a dog that is classified as ‘banned’ under legislation.
- Dangerous dogs – any dog that requires an exemption certificate, or which the Government has advised should not be kept as a pet, will not be permitted to be kept at EFDC housing properties.
- Microchipping – all dogs and cats must be microchipped in accordance with relevant legislation.

Homeless Applicants

Homeless applicants who are housed in EFDC owned temporary accommodation are not permitted any animals. Where we have procured private sector accommodation for a homeless household, the agreement with the private sector provider will stipulate whether animals are allowed or not.

Where the Council is able to provide temporary housing then the relevant provisions of this policy will apply (e.g., no pets on Independent Living Schemes).

Prohibited pets

Dogs listed in [Dangerous Dogs Act](#) and any animals listed in the [Dangerous Wild Animals Act](#) will not be given permission to live in one of our homes, with no exceptions. This is to protect the health and safety of any customers and Council employees who may encounter them.

If we are made aware of any customer that keeps any pets as described above, we will treat this as a breach of tenancy and commence legal proceedings to obtain possession of the home.

If any animal becomes listed as dangerous then tenants who have such an animal will be required to rehome them.

Assistance Animals

Assistance animals including Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs will be permitted in any property type, on the provision of appropriate evidence by the tenant.

House Cats

This policy does not preclude tenants and lessees from keeping housecats, and EFDC still requires residents to request permission so that we can ensure that the home is suitable.

We would also expect tenants and lessees to follow advice, such as that from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the RSPCA). The RSPCA advice regarding house cats is at:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/cats/environment/indoors>

Small Pets

Very small animals such as birds, insects and fish may be kept subject to permission being obtained from EFDC. Tenants should ensure that any pet cannot escape from their home or garden.

If a cage or tank is required to keep the pet then tenant should ensure it is suitable for their home. This includes, for example, being aware of the weight of a fish tank full of water and not having one so large that it may affect the flooring or cause a significant flood if it leaks.

Animal Welfare

Tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets and any other animals at their property. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day to day management and care of the pet.

Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccinations and neutering where appropriate.

Should EFDC become aware that a pet is not being given due duty of care, we will take steps to inform the relevant professional organisation, such as the RSPCA, and will consider prohibiting the keeping of the pet or any future pets in the home.

In particular tenants must ensure suitable day to day management and care of pets. tenants should not leave their pets in the property whilst they are away from the

property for a prolonged period unless suitable arrangements have been made with a responsible person to provide adequate care. If it is suspected that a customer has abandoned a property leaving a pet behind, the RSPCA will be informed immediately. If any EFDC officer or contractor has concerns regarding how a pet is treated, they will report this to RSPCA.

EFDC recommends that dogs should be permanently identified by a microchip and the identification details registered in line with legislation. It is now compulsory for all cats to be microchipped by 10th June 2024 and contact details to be stored and kept up to date in a pet microchipping database.

EFDC recommends that pets such as cats and dogs are neutered to prevent unwanted kittens or puppies. They should also be vaccinated and wormed at regular intervals. Animal welfare societies like the PDSA or RSPCA may help with the costs in cases of financial hardship.

Nuisance

Any tenant keeping a pet is responsible for any nuisance the pet may cause. Nuisance will be treated as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and EFDC will take appropriate action to remedy the behaviour promptly. Nuisance includes allowing any pet to roam, foul or cause disturbance on land managed by SHG or on neighbouring land. Nuisance also includes excessive noise and smells that may disturb other households.

Any fouling in private, communal, and public areas must be cleared up immediately. Pet dogs should be restrained on a lead at all times when in communal areas and must not cause any damage to your property or any communal areas. Animals must not enter children's play areas. A suitable fence or barrier preventing your pet from straying from a garden or other outside area should be in place.

Feed for any animals must be stored correctly and not in a way that would attract vermin or insects to a property or communal areas. Faeces must be disposed of correctly, i.e., wrapped and disposed of in an appropriate waste bin.

No animals are allowed to wander freely in communal areas and dogs must be kept on a lead whenever they are in communal grounds, internal and external.

The Pet Permission

Once given, the pet permission only applies to the specific animal or animals listed in the application. If that (or those) animal(s) are rehomed or pass away they cannot be replaced. If a tenant wishes to have another animal, or animals, then permission must be sought again.

The Council has the right to remove any pet or other animal if it causes damage to a tenant's home or any communal areas, or if it causes nuisance to your neighbours. Cruelty towards any animal will be reported to the Police and/or the RSPCA.

The pet permission application and EFDC permission letter will be updated to match this policy and will be reviewed regularly by officers and updated as necessary.

Consultation

This Policy has been tested with the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel to assess the reasonableness of our approach and discuss any concerns our customers may have. The response from that Panel was that greater clarity was needed. A revised section of the Tenant Handbook has been prepared which adds clarity and this is being tested with the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

EFDC recognises that in exceptional circumstances (such as if the prospective customer has certain disabilities or other health issues) some customers may benefit from having a pet. This could be within a property that traditionally does not permit pets.

Assistance animals, Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs will be permitted in any property type, on the provision of appropriate evidence by the tenant.

Reviewing the Strategy

This Policy will be reviewed after 5 years from the date of coming into force. In addition, the pet permission form will be kept under review and amended as appropriate by Officers.

If the tenancy agreement or legislation changes significantly then any subsequent changes required to this policy will be approved by the Portfolio Holder, after consultation with EFDC Housing residents.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:	Pet Permission Application Form
Appendix 2:	Pet Permission
Appendix 3:	Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

This permission form is available as an online form and requires the following information.

Name

UNDER REVISION – new layout/design being developed

Permission to keep a pet or other animal at your home

Please note, a permission to own a pet application form must be completed for each individual pet.

UNDER REVISION – new layout/design being developed

Clauses from Tenancy Agreements and Leases

For Tenants

“Pets Premises with enclosed gardens

The consent of the Council will be required before more than one dog is kept at the Premises. The Tenant will keep the dog under proper control at all times and be responsible for keeping dogs on a lead in the communal areas and clearing any waste in a hygienic manner, including at the Premises. No type of dog prescribed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other legislation may be kept at the Premises. The Council’s written consent will be required to keep any other animal that may cause a nuisance.

Premises without an enclosed garden

The Council’s written consent will be required to keep any animal that may cause a nuisance. If consent is granted, the Tenant will keep the animal under proper control at all times and be responsible for keeping dogs on a lead and clearing any waste in a hygienic manner, including at the Premises. Dogs will not be allowed in any communal gardens. No type of dog prescribed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other legislation may be kept at the Premises

Not to keep a pet animal if living in a sheltered or grouped housing scheme for older people, with the exception of a caged bird or a similar pet which may be allowed with the written consent of the Council.

The Council may at any time require the removal of any pet or animal if in its opinion it is kept in a manner prejudicial to the comfort of other Tenants/residents, or the well being of the pet or animal, or detrimental to the Council’s property.”

Leaseholders

Leaseholders are bound by their Lease, and they are responsible for ensuring anyone living at their property complies with the lease. The EFDC standard lease states:

“no dog or other animal which may cause annoyance to any owner or occupiers of the other flats comprised in the Building shall be kept in the Property; and no dog cat or other animal shall be kept in the Property without the written consent of the Landlord which consent may be revoked at the discretion of the Landlord,”

The Leasehold Handbook also includes the following wording:

“The consent of the Council will be required for dogs or any other animal to be kept at the property that could cause annoyance. The Tenant/ Leaseholder will keep the dog under proper control at all times and be responsible for keeping dogs on a lead in the communal areas and clearing any waste in a hygienic manner, including at the Premises.

No type of dog prescribed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other legislation, may be kept at the premises.”

Equality Impact Assessment

UNDER REVISION