



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Pets Policy

(SCDC Council Housing Stock)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) recognises the benefits that keeping a pet can have.
- 1.2 With this in mind, we feel it is important to promote responsible pet ownership and to provide an overview of the duties that pet owners must consider when deciding to add a pet to their household.
- 1.3 This policy will outline the permission request process, the conditions that are implied when permission has been granted and SCDC's overall policy on keeping animals.
- 1.4 This policy reflects current best practice and supports responsible pet ownership while balancing the needs of tenants, neighbours, and the wider community.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all tenants that hold any tenancy or licence agreement with SCDC. It does not extend to people in temporary accommodation, or properties that are not owned and/or managed by SCDC.
- 2.2 The pet permission request process does not apply to leaseholders; however, they must adhere to any lease conditions, not allow their animals to cause a nuisance or any anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the community and ensure any legal duties are satisfied.

Assistance animals

- 2.3 Assistance dogs are permitted and are not subject to the pet permission process. We recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where required. Tenants are encouraged to inform us if they have an assistance animal so that we can maintain accurate records and ensure appropriate support.



3. Pets and permission

- 3.1 Our tenancy agreement states that tenants may keep one suitable domestic pet without obtaining permission from SCDC. A domestic pet is defined as an animal commonly kept in the home for companionship, which is suitable for the type of accommodation and does not pose a risk to health, safety, or the wellbeing of others.
- 3.2 If a household wishes to keep more than one pet, a '[Pet Permission Request Form](#)' must be completed. This can be submitted [online](#), or requested in paper format. This requirement does not apply to small animals that are kept indoors in appropriate cages or tanks and are unlikely to cause disturbance, such as fish, hamsters or gerbils. If you are unsure as to whether permission is required, please contact the Housing Services Officer (HSO) for advice.
- 3.3 Where permission is required to keep a pet, the application must be made by the tenant of the property, even if the pet is owned by another member of the household.
- 3.4 Permission to keep a pet must be obtained in advance. Where a pet has been introduced without the required consent, any request for retrospective permission will be considered on a case-by-case basis but cannot be guaranteed and may be refused.
- 3.5 As part of the tenancy agreement, all pet owners are required to ensure that their pet(s) do not cause nuisance or any anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 3.6 Tenants must be aware of their responsibilities under the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#) (see [section 6](#) for more information). By submitting the '[Pet Permission Request Form](#)' tenants are confirming that they understand their duties under this Act, and any other rules and regulations that are applicable to the type of pet that they wish to keep.
- 3.7 Tenants will be in breach of their tenancy agreement if they do not follow the permission process, take on a type of animal that is prohibited, allow a pet to cause ASB or do not meet their responsibilities under the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#). Where a breach occurs, SCDC will take appropriate action in line with



the tenancy agreement, which could include enforcement action and, in serious or persistent cases, seeking possession of the property.

- 3.8 To support public safety, proportionate risk management and compliance with legal duties, the Council maintains an internal register of known dangerous dogs associated with Council-owned properties. This includes dogs that are required to be registered under relevant legislation, such as those subject to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, as well as cases where incidents involving aggressive or dangerous behaviour have been reported to the Council. The register is used to help ensure the safety of Council officers, contractors and others carrying out their duties, and to inform appropriate housing management, engagement and enforcement actions. Information is held and processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Additional Works

- 3.9 Where keeping a pet requires additional works to be carried out, for example to ensure fencing is suitable and secure (such as preventing escape, digging under or jumping over, or intimidation of other residents), it will be the tenant's responsibility to arrange and pay for these works. The tenant may also be required to obtain our permission before carrying out any such works.
- 3.10 Where a pet requires outside housing or accommodation, for example a chicken coop, aviary or kennel, tenants must inform us in advance. Permission may be required before any such structure is installed or constructed and tenants will be responsible for keeping it in good repair and for removing it when they vacate the property.

Fair consideration of requests

- 3.11 We will not unreasonably withhold permission, but we will need to consider a number of relevant factors before approval can be given. These will depend on the type of pet and may include (but are not limited to):
- The size of the property
 - The type of the property
 - The location of the property
 - The type/breed of animal



- Access to a safe and secure garden area, that is adequate for the type of pet
- Any other requirements that would be needed for a pet's wellbeing

Decision timescales

- 3.12 Once we receive a completed Pet Permission Form, we will aim to make a decision and provide a response in writing within 28 calendar days. In some circumstances, we may need to request further information to properly assess the request. Where this happens, the 28-day period will normally begin once the additional information has been provided. We will keep tenants informed if there is any delay and explain the reasons for this.
- 3.13 All requests to keep a pet will be considered on their individual merits. We will not apply a blanket ban on pets and will not refuse permission without good reason. Decisions will be based on relevant factors such as the suitability of the property, the type of pet, animal welfare considerations and the potential impact on other residents. Any refusal of permission will be explained clearly in writing.

Conditional permission and withdrawal

- 3.14 Permission to keep a pet may be granted subject to conditions. Where concerns arise (for example relating to nuisance, anti-social behaviour, property damage or animal welfare), we will normally:
- Explain the concern to the tenant in writing; and
 - Give the tenant an opportunity to take reasonable steps to address within an agreed timeframe.
- 3.15 Permission may be withdrawn where serious concerns arise or where reasonable steps to resolve issues have not been taken.
- 3.16 Any decision to withdraw permission will be proportionate and explained in writing.



Review of decisions

- 3.17 Where permission to keep a pet is refused or withdrawn, tenants may ask for the decision to be reviewed by a senior officer not previously involved in the decision. Requests for review should be made in writing within a reasonable period and should set out any additional information the tenant would like us to consider.

Types of pets unlikely to be permitted

- 3.18 Whilst each application will be assessed individually, permission is unlikely to be granted for the following types of pets, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the risks can be appropriately managed:
- Horses/ponies
 - Farmyard animals
 - Venomous/poisonous animals
 - Wild or exotic animals
 - Banned animals (unless a court order has exempted the animal)
 - Animals which are too large for the property or available space
- 3.19 Any decision will take account of legal requirements, animal welfare considerations, and the impact on neighbouring residents.
- 3.20 A tenant, anyone living at the property, or any visitors, must not keep or bring into the area any breed of dog specified as dangerous in the '[Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#)' or any animals registered under the '[Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#)' (unless a court order has exempted them). It is important for tenants to keep up to date with related legislation, as there may be new changes or restrictions that are introduced over time which they must also comply with.

XL Bully dogs

- 3.21 Following a rise in serious incidents involving XL Bully dogs, the Government has added this breed to the list of dogs banned under the [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#).
- 3.22 It is now a criminal offence to own or possess an XL Bully dog (in England and Wales) unless you have a valid Certificate of Exemption.



3.23 It is also against the law to:

- sell an XL Bully dog
- abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray
- give away an XL Bully dog
- breed from an XL Bully dog
- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle

3.24 If you have a Certificate of Exemption for your XL Bully dog, you must have third party public liability insurance for your dog.

3.25 Any owners must comply with the legislation introduced by the UK Government, full information (including the conditions that are required to be met to obtain a Certificate of Exemption) can be found on their [website](#).

3.26 A copy of the Certificate of Exemption must be provided to SCDC.

3.27 Where we become aware that an XL Bully dog is being kept in breach of legal requirements, we will seek to engage with the tenant to understand the circumstances and compliance status. Where necessary, and in line with our legal obligations, we may need to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities. Continued non-compliance may affect a tenant's tenancy.

3.28 Tenants must not keep any animal listed under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), including those in Schedule 9, without appropriate licensing and controls. The keeping of wild or exotic animals is subject to legal restrictions and may be refused on environmental or welfare grounds.

Commercial Use, Breeding and Animal-Related Activities

3.29 No SCDC property is to be used for the organised breeding or sale of animals.

3.30 Boarding kennels, catteries etc. may not be run or operated from an SCDC property.

3.31 Running a dog sitting business from home at one of our properties may be considered, but tenants must always ask SCDC for permission. More



information about requesting permission to run a small business from home can be found on our [website](#).

4. Agreement

4.1 By SCDC granting permission, tenants are agreeing that the following conditions will be adhered to:

- Tenants will only keep the numbers of pets that SCDC have been informed of.
- Tenants must keep up to date with, and adhere to, all legislation (existing or new) concerning the care and registration of pets.
- Tenants should ensure that animals are well behaved and do not cause a nuisance or any ASB to the community.
- All cats and dogs must be appropriately microchipped as outlined in [The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs \(England\) Regulations 2023](#).
- All dogs must be microchipped by the time they are 8-weeks old, and cats must be microchipped by the time they are 20-weeks old (even if they usually stay indoors), and their details recorded on an approved UK database. See [GOV.UK](#) for more information.
- All dogs in a public place must wear a collar that displays their owner's address and postcode as outlined in the Control of Dogs Order 1992.
- Dogs will be walked on a lead whilst in residential or built-up areas.
- No breeding or sale of animals from an SCDC property is permitted.
- Boarding kennels may not be run or operated from an SCDC property.
- Tenants must register any poultry, or other captive birds, within the first month of keeping them (this includes any birds kept as pets). There are some exceptions, more information and how to register can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).
- Tenants will be responsible for their pet's behaviour and ensure that their pets do not cause damage to anyone's property, including their own home.
- Any damage caused by pets will be rectified and paid for by the pet owner.
- Ensuring any litter trays etc. are regularly cleared and cleaned.
- Pets and any litter trays will not be left or housed in communal areas (e.g. hutches etc. in stairwells)



- Pets must not be left alone for long periods of time without adequate care arrangements in place.
- Any fouling by a pet will be cleared up straight away and properly disposed of.
- Animals will not be allowed to roam freely around communal/public areas.
- Tenants and leaseholders will be required to source and pay for any additional items that may be required to keep their pet safe and under control (e.g. additional fencing etc.).
- Pets should not be chained up, nor should they be left outside, unattended for long periods of time (especially in unsuitable weather conditions or an insecure environment).

5. Animal Welfare Act (2006)

- 5.1 [Section 9](#) of the [Animal Welfare Act \(2006\)](#) contains provisions to safeguard the welfare of animals. The duty of care outlined means pet owners must take reasonable steps to meet the needs and ensure the welfare of their animals.
- 5.2 The act outlines five welfare need areas that those responsible for an animal must ensure are met. They are:
- Need for suitable environment
 - Need for suitable diet
 - Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
 - Need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
 - Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury or disease
- 5.3 More information on caring for pets can be found on the GOV.UK [website](#).

6. Pets and temporary accommodation

- 6.1 There may be occasions when the Council needs to provide temporary accommodation for a tenant, for example where we need to carry out major works.



- 6.2 Wherever possible, SCDC will try to provide temporary accommodation that can accommodate a household's pet(s). However, this is not always possible, which means that it may be necessary for tenants to make arrangements for someone else to care for their pet for a period of time. For example, this may be required if temporary accommodation is provided in a hostel building with shared areas.
- 6.3 We appreciate that this can be difficult and can provide information on local animal charities that may be able to assist.

7. Animal cruelty, neglect, hoarding or abandonment

- 7.1 SCDC take the neglect of animals very seriously and will work with the relevant authorities to ensure that action is taken against any offenders.

8. Nuisance being caused by a pet

- 8.1 Residents are responsible for their pets and should ensure that their animals are well behaved and do not cause a nuisance to the surrounding community.
- 8.2 Some of the things that may be considered as causing a nuisance may include (although not limited to):
- Pets fouling in communal areas (and not being cleared up) or other people's gardens
 - Animals making excessive noise
 - Aggressive animals
 - Leaving food outside that is attracting vermin
 - Foul smells
- 8.3 We reserve the right to withdraw permission if the animal is causing unacceptable nuisance. In some cases, this unacceptable nuisance can also be a breach of tenancy, please see [3.6](#).
- 8.4 Our Housing Enforcement Team (HET) will predominately deal with any anti-social behaviour relating to animals.



- 8.5 Owners are responsible for the behaviour of their animals and are expected to keep their pets under control.

9. Accessibility and inclusion

- 9.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all. This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times or locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

10. About this policy

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed in one year, to assess its effectiveness and ensure that it is not unduly onerous. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and/or legislation.
- 10.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.



11. Service requests and complaints process

- 11.1 A tenant should report initial service requests through the designated channels.

General Queries: Tel: 01954 713 000 or
E-mail duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk.



The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

- 11.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

12. Our values

Ambitious

- We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.
- We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

- We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.
- We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

- We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.
- We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

- We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.
- We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.