



Landlord Housing Policies

Corporate Priority:	Providing high quality council homes and landlord services
Relevant Ward Member(s):	N/A
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 Scrutiny Committee has noted the current lack of an effective policy framework for the Council Housing Revenue Account services, and has welcomed the intention, driven by Corporate Priorities One and Two, to address this area of weakness.
- 1.2 This report seeks to provide Scrutiny Committee with two policies for detailed discussion, and to invite comment and question on a further three policies that, for ease, are also appended to the report.

2 Recommendations

That Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the content of the report;
- 2.2 Provides comment on the Council's draft Void Policy and Tenancy Management (Legal Action) Policy;
- 2.3 Agrees to provide any additional comment on the Right to Buy; Aids and Adaptation; and Domestic Abuse Policies.

3 General Context

- a) This tranche of policies seek to address areas of significant risk of either reputational or financial loss due to a clearly adopted Policy position.

- b) All Policies are in draft format, with an intention of submitting to Cabinet in January 2021 for consideration. All Policies will by that stage have been discussed with Tenant Forum Executive Committee (TFEC), for comment and amendment as necessary. Additionally, all Policies have been or will have been subject to a full peer-challenge Equality Impact Assessment
- c) The Domestic Abuse Policy has been shared with and welcomed by the Community Safety Partnership; its adoption will allow the Council to become a signatory of the Chartered institute of Housing’s “Stamp it Out” campaign, aimed at improving the housing sector’s response to domestic abuse issues.

4 Suggested Points for discussion

4.1 For ease, suggested discussion points are tabulated below and comment is invited on these specifics; other questions and comments are of course welcomed.

Void Policy	The policy adopts the following mission statement: Minimise loss to the Council through the efficient letting of homes at the right time to the required standard
	The policy adopts the following key priorities: a) Provide a safe and secure home; b) Ensure that our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard; c) Improve re-let timescales; d) Provide a re-let standard that meets customers’ expectations; e) Capture excellent data on the property and its major components; and f) Maximise the use of IT.
	The policy commits to undertaking major capital works during the void period – principle “b” above, and sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 within the policy.
	Further work on the “Golden Goodbye” is committed to: 4.3.11 To assist with re-let times the Council may: a) Offer an incentive to tenants to leave their home in lettable condition... This is in line with the Void Task and Finish Group recommendations.
	The policy commits to a Melton Void Quality Standard (MVQS) – this is detailed in the Appendix to the Policy. This is subject to a practical exercise with TFEC and Officers testing the standard against a current void property that is “ready to let”.
Tenancy Management (Legal Action)	The principles underpinning the Policy are: a) a)the housing service will clearly explain to tenants specific actions they must take to avoid legal action at each stage; b) b)the housing service will actively promote joint working with other Council departments and external agencies; c) c)that procedures and agreed practices will be implemented consistently across the service; d) d)that training will be provided to ensure all staff are fully equipped to carry out the roles expected of them; and e) e)that all communication will be in plain language and will make clear who the appropriate officers are to provide advice and assistance.

	<p>The framework for possession action is suggested as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) where there are rent arrears in excess of the equivalent of ten week's rent and no effective agreement; c) where there are long-standing rent arrears and a history of broken agreements to repay; d) where there is a significant breach of tenancy and appropriate time and advice/support has been given for it to be rectified; e) where there are a number of less significant breaches of tenancy and appropriate time and advice/support has been given for them to be rectified; f) where there is evidence of significant neighbour nuisance and appropriate time and advice/support has been given for this to be rectified; g) where there is a criminal conviction related to the use of the property (e.g. possession of illegal drugs found at the property) or in its locality; and h) evidence of serious ASB in the locality of the property.
	<p>In deciding to apply for an eviction, the following issues are suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) where an outright order has been obtained; b) where there is clear evidence of continued tenancy breaches, significant either in frequency or impact; c) where opportunity has been given to remedy the breach(es), but they have not been resolved; d) in rent arrears cases, where the tenant is more than ten weeks behind the Court order and has been given opportunity to catch up, or where the tenant is repeatedly failing to make payments as ordered by the Court; e) where there is clear evidence of risk to the community, or to Council Officers or contractors.

5 Financial Implications

Comment on financial implications (if any) will be given through the formal report seeking policy approval

Financial Implications reviewed by: N/A

6 Legal and Governance Implications

Comment on legal implications (if any) will be given through the formal report seeking policy approval

Legal Implications reviewed by: N/A

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Draft Aids and Adaptions Policy
- 7.2 Appendix B – Draft Domestic Abuse Policy
- 7.3 Appendix C – Draft Right to Buy Policy
- 7.4 Appendix C1 – Draft Right to Buy Additional Information Request
- 7.5 Appendix D – Draft Tenancy Management Policy (Legal Action
- 7.6 Appendix E – Draft Voids Policy

7.7 Appendix E1 - Draft Melton Voids Quality Standard Policy (App 1)

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