

SUBJECT: INCOME MANAGEMENT AND ARREARS POLICY (HOUSING TENANTS)

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the reviewed Income Management and Arrears Policy (previously Rent Arrears Recovery Policy) document and highlight changes.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

LTP have been consulted about this report and have made the following comments:

- The Panel agree with the revised policy in general terms.
- They requested more information on the outcomes of the Eviction Prevention Panel that is referenced in the document, and this can be provided annually.
- LTP would like to see review information in 6-months' time about the performance of pilot structure with a dedicated Rent Team. There will be a review of how the pilot structure is working and the information can be shared.
- The Panel would like to work on looking at how we sustain tenancies, particularly for first time tenants and people who are being resettled from other types of accommodation. A working group is being formed with LTP to look at this.
- There will need to be further work to look at what makes up the total amount of arrears, and this will include considering any coming from "bedroom tax" and a working group to review the Downsizing Scheme pilot.

3. Background

- 3.1 This Policy is scheduled for its 3-year review in 2024.
- 3.2 The report and policy were presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 8 August 2024.

4. Proposed Amendments

- 4.1 All references to legislation and guidance have been updated.

4.2 The Policy has had no significant changes to its content and purpose so has not been widely consulted on. It has been re-written in a clearer format and elements that are more procedural have been removed.

4.3 It is proposed to look at further work on the technical aspects of income collection, which do not impact on the content of this policy, later this financial year.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

To have a fair and consistent approach to collecting rental income and arrears.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in reviewing this policy.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are legal implications of reviewing this policy, as there were for the previous policy, because it can result in taking possession proceedings.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The review of the policy has no implications for Equality, Diversity or Human Rights.

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

An Equality Impact Assessment was not required as part of this review as any amendments were not a change to the existing policy.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

No risks are identified with reviewing this policy.

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

N/A.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the attached Policy is approved.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? 1

List of Background Papers: Income Management and Arrears Policy

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