

Present: Councillor Chris Burke (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Natasha Chapman,
Councillor Callum Roper and Councillor Calum Watt

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Liz Bushell and Councillor Rachel Storer

16. Confirmation of Minutes - 1 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

17. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

18. Department of Housing and Investment Remedies Policy

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development:

- a. presented a report to seek comments on the Department of Housing Draft Remedies Policy as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report
- b. reported that the Council now had a statutory duty to handle customer complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code (The Code)
- c. detailed the main statutory requirements expected of the Council as follows:
 - Section 7.1: Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.
 - Section 7.2: Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.
 - Section 7.3: The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.
 - Section 7.5: Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.
- d. highlighted that whilst there were existing procedures for offering small sums to compensate loss, there was not a formal policy document which was in line with the HOS Guidance on Remedies and therefore, one needed to be developed and agreed to ensure compliance with The Code
- e. advised that Lincoln Tenants Panel had made the following comments when consulted on this report:
 - Recommended the remedies policy be reviewed annually.
 - LTP requested that they be provided with an annual report on the volume of compensation administered and areas of service related to.

- Agreed with the proposed compensation amounts and increments system relating to qualifying improvements, gesture of goodwill and payment of compensation to customers.
 - Recommended rent refund for disturbance allowance amount be reduced
- f. explained that the policy was reviewed at Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on 31 October 2024, and it was approved at Executive on 18 November 2024
- g. further explained that any recommendations from Policy Scrutiny Committee would be considered and approved by the City Solicitor in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources, unless there were major changes which would be referred to Executive
- h. invited members comments on the content of the report and Remedies Policy.

The committee discussed the report in detail and were provided with the following responses to questions asked by members:

- A claim could be submitted in writing via letter or email and support would be provided to those that were unable to communicate in writing.
- A communications timetable had been drawn up to advertise the policy to tenants. The Lincoln Tenants Panel would also assist with communicating the policy to tenants.
- If the Council received an expression of dissatisfaction from a tenant, they would be asked if they would like to make a formal complaint and remedies may arise as part of that process.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Draft Remedies Policy be supported.
2. The assistance given by the Lincoln Tenant's Panel in developing this policy be noted.

19. Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development:

- a. presented a report to seek comments on the new Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report
- b. reported that the Council now had a statutory duty to handle customer complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code (The Code)
- c. advised that whilst there were existing procedures for reporting incidents and handling reports of unacceptable behaviour, it was not a formal policy document and therefore, one needed to be developed and agreed to ensure compliance with The Code

- d. highlighted that the new policy had been developed with the assistance of Lincoln Tenant's Panel who were keen to help ensure that while protecting staff, the policy was also proportionate in terms of the action taken
- e. explained that the policy was reviewed at Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on 31 October 2024, and it was approved at Executive on 18 November 2024
- f. further explained that any recommendations from Policy Scrutiny Committee would be considered and approved by the City Solicitor in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources, unless there were major changes which would be referred to Executive
- g. welcomed members feedback on the content of the policy:

The committee discussed the report in detail and were provided with the following responses to questions asked by members:

- There were different tiers of actions to be taken depending on the circumstance of the unacceptable behaviour. The actions taken were aimed at stopping the behaviour so that the customer could be supported with their issue.
- Cases where staff had been threatened or hassled were considered by the Corporate Management Team and actions put in place such as allocating the customer with a single point of contact.
- Depending on the situation information about the unacceptable behaviour could be shared e.g. information would be shared with a contractor who was visiting a customer's home where that had been incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Details of the customer could also be included on the Exercise with Caution Register which was shared with relevant staff.
- Each individual was considered on a case-by-case basis and appropriate support was provided such as mental health support for vulnerable adults and safeguarding procedures for children.
- Records were kept for 6 years which was in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

RESOLVED that:

1. The Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy be supported.
2. The assistance given by the Lincoln Tenant's Panel in developing this policy be noted.

20. Corporate Document Review

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director, Transformation and Strategic Development gave a verbal update on the Corporate Document Review and covered the following main points:

- The current spreadsheet contained a list of 247 policies, strategies and guidance notes and included information on when each document was due for review.

- It was not clear on the current spreadsheet if there was a link between documents.
- Officers felt that the spreadsheet would benefit from a fuller review which could include details of:
 - document type
 - the date the document was agreed
 - when the document was published on the website
 - if and how documents were linked together
 - when the document was due to be reviewed
 - if there had been significant changes to the document, how had this been rolled out and if training was needed
- All document owners had been contacted from the spreadsheet and they had confirmed that all documents had either already been reviewed or would be reviewed imminently.
- Suggested that a review of Corporate Documents be considered by Policy Scrutiny Committee in Quarter 1 of 2025/26 once the full review had been completed.

RESOLVED that:

1. The verbal update be noted.
2. The Corporate Document Review be scheduled into the Policy Scrutiny Work Programme in Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

21. Health Scrutiny Update

The Chair of Policy Scrutiny Committee updated members of the business that had been discussed at the Health Scrutiny meeting held on 6 November 2024, these were:

- Lincolnshire Integrated Care System Winter Plan 2024/25
- Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025
- Non-Emergency Patient Transport

The committee discussed in detail how the closure of some pharmacies had affected some areas of the City. The review of pharmaceutical needs by the Health Scrutiny Committee was welcomed by Members.

Emily Holmes, Assistant Director of Strategic Development suggested that her team could undertake a mapping exercise to track the current pharmacy provision in the city for information to feed into Lincolnshire County Councils review of Pharmaceutical Needs.

The Chair further suggested that Officers liaise with the Chief Executive of Lincolnshire Co-op as part of this work.

RESOLVED that:

1. The update be noted.
2. A mapping exercise of the current pharmacy provision be undertaken by Officers and circulated to members.

22. Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 and Executive Work Programme

Update

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the report 'Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 and Executive Work Programme Update'
- b. presented the Executive Work Programme November 2024- October 2025
- c. requested councillors to submit any items they wished to scrutinise from the Executive Work Programme and policies of interest
- d. invited members questions and comments:

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.
- 2. The Executive work programme be noted.