

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PETS, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE DOGS AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS' POLICY (HOUSING TENANTS)</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND INVESTMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICE MANAGER</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the reviewed Pets, Medical Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support Animals Policy document and highlight changes.

## **2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation (LTP)**

LTP have been involved in this area of work.

LTP were asked at a meeting in January 2024 to co-create an updated version of the Pets Policy which was due for review.

LTP members created a sub-group to review the existing policy and research best practice and policies of other housing providers in the local area.

The group provided amendments to the policy document and made suggestions about making it easier to read. They provided examples of information from other organisations that they found easy to engage with.

They were fundamental in the inclusion of information about Medical Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support animals and recognising the importance of animals in supporting tenants with their wellbeing.

The amended policy was discussed at a meeting in February and further amendments agreed with LTP and a final version circulated in May 2024 that incorporated all of the LTP suggestions.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 A report was presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 8 August 2024 to highlight the intention to fully review the existing Pet Policy following a new Dangerous Dogs ban and because it had not been reviewed since 2013.
- 3.2 This review has been completed in partnership with Lincoln Tenants Panel, who are satisfied that the attached Policy meets legislation and the needs of our tenants.

## **4. Proposed Amendments**

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

- 4.2 The Policy now makes clear reference to current, and future, banned breeds with exemptions and how the Council will respond to them.
- 4.3 There is information in the policy about supporting the health and wellbeing of tenants by clarifying our approach to Medical Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support animals.
- 4.4 To ensure an emphasis on responsible animal care and a commitment to protect their welfare in our properties.

## **5. Strategic Priorities**

### **5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality**

To have a fair and consistent approach for our tenants who wish to have pets.

### **5.2 Let's deliver quality housing**

Quality housing is not solely about the condition of the property. It is also about making a positive environment where people can thrive. For many people, the ability to have pets enhances their wellbeing and home.

Enforcement of the policy will prioritise the safety and welfare of humans and animals. If the contents of the policy are breached, the Council will work with the tenants to agree improvement plans which could include taking actions to improve welfare issues and this could include working with appropriate partners to take any necessary enforcement action.

## **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 no legal implications of reviewing this policy.

### **6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

Although the review of the policy may have an impact on tenants who currently own XL Bully dogs, the change is legislative and beyond the control of the Council.

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

## **7. Risk Implications**

### **7.1 (i) Options Explored**

There are no risks associated with the revised policy.

### **7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach**

N/A.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 That the policy be approved as attached.

**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:**

Pets Policy

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