

**SUBJECT: TENANCY FRAUD POLICY (HOUSING TENANTS)**

**DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

**REPORT AUTHOR: MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICE MANAGER**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the reviewed Housing Fraud Policy document.

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

LTP have been involved in this area of work by being consulted on the content of the policy and providing feedback.

The Panel had a workshop on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to look at the policy & collate feedback.

They confirmed that they found the policy easy to read and that it provides a clear understanding of preventing, identifying and acting on tenancy fraud.

LTP requested the following:

- On page 5, the start of the last paragraph to be reworded from “we accept” to “we understand” – this was updated
- On the final page, a brief explanation for why references, legal frameworks, and regulatory framework is included, e.g. why is it important to the policy? – this was updated to be clearer
- Adding a section in the policy that explains where an individual can get support either from the Council or from other extra support – this was not added because it relates to procedures and information to the public, but it has been requested that the web page is updated to include this
- On the website there is a link to different forms for reporting and these could be included – the link to the relevant web page was added
- Adding a section for if you suspect someone/yourself is a victim of fraud tenancy then can report it - this was not added because it relates to procedures and information to the public, and it is already on the web page

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 As a Registered Provider of social housing, we have obligations under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 to identify and prevent tenancy fraud.
- 3.2 It is also a requirement of the Regulator’s Tenancy Standard that we make every effort to identify and prevent tenancy fraud.
- 3.3 This is a reviewed version of the Tenancy Fraud Policy that was created in November 2020.

## **4. Policy Content**

- 4.1 The policy provides the legal and regulatory context for managing tenancy fraud.
- 4.2 The Policy makes clear reference to measures we will take to identify, prevent and minimise the risk of tenancy fraud occurring.
- 4.3 It reflects a clear intent that we will take decisive action where we have evidence that fraud has taken place, including supporting prosecutions.

## **5. Strategic Priorities**

### **5.1 Let's Reduce All Kinds of Inequality**

To have a fair and consistent approach to tackling tenancy fraud that may otherwise deprive people in housing need waiting to be housed.

### **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. This includes a responsibility for making the best use of our housing stock and ensuring it is well-managed so that tenants can clearly see that we care about delivering an excellent, fair service.

## **6. Organisational Impacts**

### **6.1 Finance (Including Whole Life Costs Where Applicable)**

There are potential financial implications to all forms of fraud, but this policy does not add to what is already currently done to address tenancy fraud.

### **6.2 Legal Implications Including Procurement Rules**

There are legal implications of this policy in terms of the potential resource impact on the Legal Services Team of any increase in enforcement action arising from a proactive approach to tackling tenancy fraud.

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

There may be circumstances where occupants of a property may be affected by enforcement action when they were an unwitting participant in fraudulent activity. The policy commits to risk assessing these individually and providing a minimum level of support depending on their needs and the circumstances.

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 policy.

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

N/A.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 To note the contents of the Policy 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:**

Tenancy Fraud Policy

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