

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HOUSING & STRATEGIC PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER**

**APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON, REVIEW AND UP-DATE
THE HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Cabinet Member's approval to review and update the Housing Enforcement Policy, including the necessary consultation with relevant persons and bodies.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The overarching Enforcement Policy for Neighbourhood and Environmental Services is up-to-date, having been approved in 2009. However the existing Housing Enforcement Policy dates back to 2002 and since then housing legislation has changed significantly.
- 2.2 The Housing Enforcement Policy applies to housing regardless of tenure and describes the options available to the enforcement staff working in Housing. This allows both owners and occupiers of domestic property to understand why and in what context informal and formal action may be taken, possibly against them.
- 2.3 Its aim in particular is to ensure that outcomes from housing enforcement work are maximised to ensure improvements in standards in housing across the area. It includes approaches to improve conditions and standards in the private rented sector, as well as bringing empty properties back into use, and improving standards in the owner occupied sector where it is appropriate and proportionate to do so.
- 2.4 The policy is designed to introduce consistency of approach across the service, and to ensure that the resources that are available within the service are used to greatest effect. As a result all officers are required to comply with it when making a decision on enforcement.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option one – review, consult and update the Housing Enforcement Policy to embrace legislative changes, stock transfer and the working relationship between the Council, private landlords and other interested parties such as tenants and home owners.

3.2 Option two – take no action at this stage.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option one – this option will allow a comprehensive review and update of the policy, including consultation with those individuals and bodies that are affected by the policy to provide an up-to-date and fit for purpose document that will give consistency but also flexibility to housing enforcement.

4.2 Option two – the existing policy is out of date and the Neighbourhood and Environmental Services Enforcement Policy does not give sufficient detail on specific housing issues to ensure those on the receiving end of formal action have clarity as to what action has been taken.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial Implications – There are no financial implications.

5.2 Staffing Implications – There are no staff implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory Implications – Option one would ensure that the policy is brought up-to-date and embraces the changes in the legislation along with giving more clarity to home owners and occupiers than is currently available.

6.2 Risk and Other Implications – Option one would address any risks to the service that currently exist from an out of date policy.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 This report has been circulated internally for comments. Finance has queried an issue relating to staff and financial implications and this has been addressed.

7.2 No consultation has taken place with external partners and interested bodies as yet.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To approve the review and update of the Housing Enforcement Policy, including the necessary consultation with affected individuals, groups and bodies, including landlords and tenants.

8.2 Agree the production of a further report following consultation and to accompany the revised policy.

SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – Housing Act 2004