

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 8 August 2017

Policies – Assurance Statement - Customer

Item number	7.7
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

Council policies are key governance tools. Developing and following these policies helps achieve the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes. They are critical to the Council's operations and ensure that statutory and regulatory obligations are met in an efficient and accountable manner.

To strengthen governance arrangements in this area, a policy framework has been developed to ensure that all current Council policies are easily accessible and are created, revised and renewed in a consistent manner and to an agreed standard.

To ensure that Council policies remain current and relevant, all Council directorates are required to review policies on annual basis.

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Policies – Assurance Statement - Customer

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note that the Council policies detailed in this report have been reviewed and are considered as being current, relevant and fit for purpose.

2. Background

- 2.1 Council policies are key governance tools. Developing and following these policies helps achieve the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes. They are critical to the Council's operations and ensure that statutory and regulatory obligations are met in an efficient and accountable manner.
- 2.2 To strengthen governance arrangements in this area, a policy framework has been developed to ensure that all current Council policies are easily accessible and are created, revised and renewed in a consistent manner and to an agreed standard. This includes the development of a comprehensive register of Council policies and the introduction of a policy template to provide the Council with a standardised format in terms of content and style.
- 2.3 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee agreed the approach detailed above on 3 September 2013.

3. Main report

- 3.1 A critical element of the policy framework is to ensure that all Council policies remain fit for purpose. This requires each directorate to review, on an annual basis, all policies relevant to their services and to provide the necessary level of assurance that these policies are current and relevant.
- 3.2 This report confirms that the policies, including procedures and service plans, listed in the appendix have been reviewed by directorate senior management and are still considered fit for purpose.
- 3.3. Some policies require minor adjustments to ensure on-going currency and accuracy (for example, any recent changes in legislation). Any changes are noted and detailed, where appropriate.
- 3.4 All Council policies are available through an interactive directory on the Council's website.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Access to up-to-date and relevant Council policies, for internal and external stakeholders, which are quality assured and reviewed on an annual basis.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no direct financial impacts as a result of this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Increased accountability, transparency and efficiencies concerning Council actions and operations.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities impacts as a result of this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is no direct sustainability impact as a result of this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation was undertaken with directorates and service areas as part of the development of a policy framework for the Council.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Report 3 September 2013 – Review of Council Policy](#)
- 10.2 [Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Report 22 May 2014 – Review of Council Policy: up-date](#)

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Links

Coalition pledges

Council outcomes

**Single Outcome
Agreement**

Appendices Assured Policies (inc procedures, plans and performance)

Appendix – Assured Policies

Policy title:	Corporate Debt Policy
Approval date:	23/02/2016
Approval body:	Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee
Review process:	Annual review taking account of changes in legislation, service improvements, regulations and wider policy initiatives.
Change details:	Annual review scheduled for August 2017.

Policy title:	Discretionary Housing Payments Policy
Approval date:	Last update 6/12/2016
Approval body:	Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee
Review process:	Annual review (or sooner if deemed appropriate) by Customer Manager, with Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee to approve any material changes. Last review 6 December 2016 as a result of national welfare reform initiatives.
Change details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHP category for mainstream households affected by the benefit cap changed from 'will pay' to 'may pay'. • When assessing financial need, the Council will exclude any income already disregarded for Housing Benefit purposes which are paid to disabled persons.

Procedure title:	Council Tax Empty Properties Procedure
Approval date:	Last update 29/10/15
Approval body:	Finance and Resources Committee
Review process:	The Scottish Government and the City of Edinburgh Council are committed to encouraging owners to return long term

	<p>empty properties back to the market and increase the supply of affordable housing.</p> <p>On 21 March 2013 the Finance and Resources Committee approved a revised charging procedure designed to reduce the number of empty properties in the city. This included a 50% Council Tax reduction, for up to 24 months, for properties that are actively being marketed for sale or let. Empty properties that do not fall in to this category are subject to a 100% Council Tax surcharge on homes unoccupied for a period of 12 months or more. Further adjustments were made in 2015 to support the supply of affordable housing.</p> <p>This procedure is reviewed in line with legislative changes and is operating effectively. No changes are planned.</p>
Change details:	No change in last 12 months.

Procedure title:	Council Tax Procedure for Second Homes
Approval date:	Last update 09/02/2017
Approval body:	City of Edinburgh Council
Review process:	In November 2016 the Scottish Government amended the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 by implementing The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016. This gave local authorities discretion to remove second home discounts.
Change details:	Removal of the Council tax discount for second homes from 1 April 2017.