

# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 August 2018

## Policies – Assurance Statement – Customer

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

### Executive Summary

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Council policies are key governance tools. They help realise the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes, and are critical to the Council's operations, ensuring 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 an annual basis. This report provides an assurance update on key policies within the Customer team – Corporate Debt Policy, Discretionary Housing Payments Policy and Council Tax policies (second homes and empty properties).

## Policies – Assurance Statement - Customer

### 1. Recommendations

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- 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

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- 2.1 Council policies are key governance tools. They help realise the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes, and are critical to the Council's operations, ensuring 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 included the development of a comprehensive register of Council policies and 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

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- 3.1 A critical element of the policy framework is to ensure that all Council policies are 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 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, change 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

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- 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

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

## 6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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

## 7. Equalities impact

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

## 8. Sustainability impact

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

## 9. Consultation and engagement

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- 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

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[Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Report 3 September 2013 – Review of Council Policy](#)

[Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Report 22 May 2014 – Review of Council Policy: up-date](#)

[Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Report 8 August 2017 – Policy Assurance](#)

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# 11. Appendices

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Appendix 1 - Assured Policies.

## Appendix – Assured Policies

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<b>Policy title:</b>	<a href="#">Corporate Debt Policy</a>
<b>Approval date:</b>	Last update and review 08/08/2017
<b>Approval body:</b>	Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee
<b>Review process:</b>	Annual review taking account of changes in legislation, service improvements, regulations and wider policy initiatives.
<b>Change details:</b>	No material change in last 12 months, with minor updates relating to data protection legislation, operational team names and current Court Costs and fees. Policy remains fit for purpose.

<b>Policy title:</b>	<a href="#">Discretionary Housing Payments Policy</a>
<b>Approval date:</b>	Last update 6/12/2016 and reviewed 08/08/2017
<b>Approval body:</b>	Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee
<b>Review process:</b>	Annual review (or sooner if deemed appropriate) by Customer Manager, with Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee to approve any material changes. Most recent changes made on 6 December 2016 as a result of national welfare reform initiatives.
<b>Change details:</b>	No change in last 12 months and policy remains fit for purpose

<b>Procedure title:</b>	<a href="#">Council Tax Empty Properties Procedure</a>
<b>Approval date:</b>	Last update 29/10/2015 and reviewed 08/08/2017
<b>Approval body:</b>	Finance and Resources Committee
<b>Review process:</b>	The Scottish Government and the City of Edinburgh Council are committed to encouraging owners to return long term empty properties back to the market and increase the supply of affordable housing.

	<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. 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.</p>
<b>Change details:</b>	No change in last 12 months and policy remains fit for purpose

<b>Procedure title:</b>	<a href="#">Council Tax Procedure for Second Homes</a>
<b>Approval date:</b>	Last update 09/02/2017 and reviewed 08/08/2017
<b>Approval body:</b>	City of Edinburgh Council
<b>Review process:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>This procedure is reviewed in line with legislative changes and is operating effectively</p>
<b>Change details:</b>	No change in last 12 months and policy remains fit for purpose