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## Bolsover District Council

### Meeting of the Housing Liaison Board on 27 January 2026

#### Agenda Item 7: Rent Arrears Policy Update

<b>Classification:</b>	This report is Public
<b>Report By:</b>	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director Housing Management

#### PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To inform the Board of recent updates and renaming to the current Rent Arrears Policy, which is proposed to be known as the Rent Collection Policy.

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#### REPORT DETAILS

##### 1. Background

- 1.1 Bolsover District Council owns and manages its housing stock consisting of 4900 properties as at November 2025.
- 1.2 All tenants of Bolsover District Council have signed a tenancy agreement, which sets out the rights and responsibilities of the tenant(s) and the Council. The tenancy agreement states that tenants, should pay their rent on a weekly basis and if they fail to do so and fall into arrears the Council can apply for Possession as set out in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as may be amended from time to time).
- 1.3 The Rent Collection Policy explains the Council's approach to prevention and collection of rent arrears. In summary the Council will take a firm but fair approach, ensuring that tenants have available financial expertise to resolve any difficulties. The Council will not tolerate tenants who are unwilling to pay debt nor receive help and legal action will be taken where necessary.
- 1.4 It clearly defines our commitment to equality and proportionality within the rent management processes. The Council in delivering this policy, will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of marital status, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, racial discrimination, personal attributes, including religious beliefs or political opinions.

1.5 The Policy ensures compliance with the Pre Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords

2. **Details of Proposal or Information**

2.1 The current Policy is 3 years old and due for renewal. It has been reviewed and updated to reflect a number of changes and the updated policy is at Appendix 1 with amendments or additions shown by track changes.

2.2 We have renamed the old Rent Arrears Policy to Rent Collection Policy. We amended the layout of the policy to set out who is involved in rent collection and how we go about this in what we feel is a logical order for tenants to understand.

2.3 We have set out that a “contact” can take many forms e.g. letters, telephone calls, text messages, emails and visits and not just letters as we have historically sent.

2.4 We have changed the reference from ‘arrears’ to ‘debt’. This change of terminology is to ensure that tenants recognise that rent is a priority debt, and added information around Universal Credit as many tenants have now migrated to this benefit from Housing Benefit. We have also updated the staffing structure and job roles.

2.5 We have removed the Current and Former Tenant Arrears Recovery Procedures and accompanying flowcharts from the Policy. These are largely procedural guides for officers, and the decision has been taken to remove these to ensure that they can be updated regularly to ensure that they are fit for purpose, reflect legislative changes and national trends, as well as developments in the rent income analytics software we use. These need to be updated more frequently than the Policy and this allows more flexibility around this. The Procedures will be updated and sit alongside the policy to ensure that all officers involved in rent collection, at different levels or stages, adopt the same fair but firm approach and takes account of the need to consider equality and proportionality when taking any action.

2.6 The Equality Act assessment and wording throughout the document have also been updated.

2.7 The revised policy was considered by Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025, who were in support of the revisions especially the change of name to Rent Collection Policy. The Policy is to be presented to Executive for approval on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

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2.8 It is considered good practice to have a policy which sets the Council approach to prevention and collection of rent, the updated policy reflects updated processes and aligns with current rent collection.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That members note the updated Rent Collection Policy to be approved by Executive on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

<b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing</b>	
Ambition: Customers	
Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers</i></li><li>○ <i>Improving the customer experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services</i></li></ul>
<p>Ambition: Housing</p> <p>Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord</i></li></ul>	
Target HOU04: Working towards compliance with the Social Housing Consumer Standards, ensuring tenants' voice is key when developing new council housing policies, procedures, and improvements.	

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1.	Rent Collection Policy