
DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY

To: **Cabinet 14th November 2013**

Main Portfolio Area: **Housing Services**

By: **Craig George, Housing Services Manager**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All**

Summary: **This is the draft Tenancy Strategy for Cabinet to approve for consultation.**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Section 150 of the Act provides that every local housing authority in England must prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy, setting out the matters to which registered providers of social housing within its district must have regard to when formulating policies, relating to;
- The kind of tenancies they grant;
 - The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind;
 - Where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the length of the term; and
 - The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy when an existing tenancy is coming to an end.
- 1.2 The Act does not affect the rights of existing social housing tenants, but does allow for more flexible arrangements for new tenants. Social landlords are now able to grant tenancies for a fixed length of time, with 5 years being the normal length. There is no upper limit on the length of fixed term tenancies and lifetime tenancies can still be offered. The government believes that flexibility in relation to the length of tenancies will help social landlords manage their homes more efficiently and fairly.
- 1.3 The ability to offer fixed term tenancies has been agreed by Registered Providers as part of their contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to enable delivery of new homes under the Affordable Homes Programme.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 The statutory provisions for developing a Tenancy Strategy, and the matters which by statute a Local Authority must take into consideration within the development process are set out in sections 150 and 151 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 In terms of developing a Tenancy Strategy, the 2011 Act provides that a Local Authority would have to develop a draft strategy to every private or social registered housing provider within its governing area, and to give reasonable opportunities to such providers to make comments on the proposed strategy.

2.3 A Members workshop was held at Thanet District Council in June 2013 and from the workshop, overall preferences in relation to the introduction of Affordable Rent, fixed term and flexible tenancies were gathered. Preferences in relation to specific circumstances for some household groups was also gathered.

2.4 The Thanet Area Board representatives were also briefed on the draft Tenancy Strategy in November 2012 and their feedback has been incorporated into the Draft Tenancy Strategy.

3.0 Options

3.1 To approve the Draft Tenancy Strategy for consultation as per legislation.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial and VAT

4.1.1 The draft Tenancy Strategy has been compiled following consultation with Registered Providers and representatives from the Council and Elected Members. It is intended that further consultation following approval of the draft document be carried out on-line via the Council's website and via email. Hard copies will only be available upon request.

4.1.2 Following final approval of the document, it is intended that the Tenancy Strategy be published on-line on the Council's website and emailed to interested parties, therefore keeping costs for both the consultation exercise and publication to a minimum.

4.2.1 Legal

Section 150 of the Localism Bill requires that every Local Authority in England must publish a Tenancy Strategy.

4.3 Corporate

4.3.1 The draft Tenancy Strategy has been written adopting the priorities of the Corporate Plan.

Priority 2 - We will tackle disadvantage across our district.

Priority 7 - We will plan for the right type and number of homes in the right place to create sustainable communities in the future.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

5.4.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out after the consultation.

6.0 Recommendation(s)

6.1 To agree the draft Tenancy Strategy for consultation.

7.0 Decision Making Process

7.1 This is a policy framework decision to go to full Council on 5th December 2013.

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Annex List

Annex 1	Draft Tenancy Strategy
Annex 2	Draft Tenancy Frequently Asked Questions

Background Papers

Title	Where to Access Document
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Communications	Hannah Thorpe, PR & Publicity Manager
Legal	None