
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM: 13
DATE OF MEETING:	15th MARCH 2007	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	BOB LEDGER (EXTN. 5775)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	TENANTS' HANDBOOK	REF: RL
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCSO1

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 That Members approve the approach being taken on the production of a new Tenants' handbook.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members note, comment upon and approve the content and proposed design of the draft Tenants' handbook.

3. Detail

- 3.1 One of the Housing Service Plan's commitments is to produce a new tenant's handbook in the current financial year. A commitment was also made to the Audit Commission Inspectors in their last visit to the Housing Service that a review of our leaflet provision would be undertaken and a new framework put in place.
- 3.2 Currently we do have a number of different leaflets of differing ages and quality that we issue to new tenants when they take on a tenancy. These are collected together, alongwith the tenancy agreement, and collated into a pack before being issued. The pack is presented in a perspex folder. The presentational impression given is reasonable but does not meet the high standard now sought by the Service and the wider Council.
- 3.3 The key information from the leaflets has been updated and rewritten and drafted into a tenants' handbook format. Draft copies of the text will be available at the meeting.
- 3.4 The text has been approved by the Plain English Campaign and the handbook, when produced, will carry the Campaign's crystal mark logo.

- 3.5 The design of the handbook is meant to reflect the accessibility of the language being used and will be attractive and modern whilst produced on paper and card from sustainable sources. Examples of the proposed handbook cover and inner leaves will also be available at the meeting.
- 3.6 The Tenants' Handbook is the first document received as part of a new tenancy and sends a key message about the kind of landlord we are. It also clarifies responsibilities of both landlord and tenant from the outset of the tenancy.
- 3.7 The new handbook will be issued to all current tenants and a supply will be held for issue to new tenants over the next two years when a reprint and/or review will be due.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Although no costs were formally agreed for the handbook production in the service plan process, a budgetary allowance has been made by officers for its production i.e. costs will be met from existing commitments and additional budget or use of reserves are not required. The design and print cost for 4,000 copies will be in the region of £10,000.

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1 A well presented and highly regarded tenants' handbook will add to the portfolio of similar documents being produced across the Council.

6 Community Implications

- 6.1 The draft Handbook has been produced with the involvement of the South Derbyshire Tenants' Forum.