

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 8</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>	<b>CATEGORY: (See Notes) DELEGATED or RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>PAUL WHITTINGHAM <a href="mailto:Paul.whittingham@southderbys.gov.uk">Paul.whittingham@southderbys.gov.uk</a></b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HOUSING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</b>	
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: (See Notes)</b>

## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Committee approves the Housing Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan (attached at Appendix A)
- 1.2 That the Committee approves the publication of the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice for Complaints self-assessment (attached at Appendix C)

## **2.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 2.1 The report includes details of the public consultation exercise completed regarding the draft Housing Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan which was presented to a meeting of this Committee on 1 October 2020.
- 2.2 Included within the Action Plan are the changes proposed during the consultation process. (these are italicised for ease of reference).
- 2.3 The Action Plan also now takes account of the new Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) standards and also seeks to address the themes contained within the Government's Social Housing White Paper which was presented to the Committee on 28 January 2021.
- 2.4 Part of the Action plan will be to develop a new policy and procedure for handling Housing complaints. This will be in compliance with the Complaint Handling Code of Practice, recently published by the Housing Ombudsman.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 The Housing Service Community Engagement Strategy 2017-2020 has been reviewed and with the support of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service a revised Strategy Action was developed and approved by the Committee on 1 October 2020 as a draft for public consultation.
- 3.2 The Consultation has concluded and some minor amendments were suggested to the Action Plan which the Committee is now asked to approve.

#### **4.0 Detail**

- 4.1 Consultation with the public on the draft Housing Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan was carried out during November and December 2020.
- 4.2 The consultation process included the publication of the Action Plan on the Council's website, and the collection of responses to set questions by email and text. One hundred and eighty five responses were received from the public and two from other Housing Providers.
- 4.3 Responses to the draft document were overwhelmingly positive with:
- 82% of respondents thinking that the Plan is easy to understand
  - 81% thinking that it reflects their interests and the services they receive
  - 82% thinking the information is interesting and engaging
  - 60% wanting more information about being involved with the Housing Service.
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- 4.4 A consolidated report showing the detailed responses is attached at Appendix B.
- 4.5 The consultation period has also allowed the Housing Service to cross reference the proposed Action Plan with the TPAS national standards for Tenant Involvement.
- 4.6 The standards cover seven themes which the Action Plan seeks to address in order to both comply with the guidance and also demonstrate the Council's Commitment to meeting the requirements of the Housing White Paper.
- 4.7 The standards are:
- Governance and Transparency (Action Plan Priority 4)
  - Scrutiny (Action Plan Priority 4)
  - Business and Strategy (Action Plan Priority 1)
  - Complaints (Action Plan Priority 3)
  - Information and Communication (Action Plan Priority 2)
  - Resources for Engagement. Community and Wider Engagement (Action Plan Priority 5)
  - Culture (Action Plan Priority 6).

- 4.8 In relation to complaints from tenants and other housing customers the Council is required to complete a self- assessment regarding its complaints process including the relationship with the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in which the Council is required to participate.
- 4.9 The self-assessment is attached at Appendix C and a revised complaints process for Housing customers will be implemented early in the new financial year.
- 4.10 The Housing Ombudsman does require Housing providers to publish the self assessment document , which will be done through the councils website.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications contained in this report

## **6.0 Corporate Implications**

### **Employment Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct employment implications contained within this report. The cost of delivering the actions set out in the Action Plan can be met from within existing Housing Revenue Account.

### **Legal Implications**

- 6.2 There is a requirement to comply with the Regulatory Guidance within the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard and also with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

### **Corporate Plan Implications**

- 6.3 This report has a direct impact on the Council's Corporate Plan Aims to:  
Engage with our communities Support and celebrate volunteering, community groups and the voluntary sector.  
Deliver excellent services Ensure consistency in the way the Council deals with its service users. Have in place methods of communication that enable customers to provide and receive information. Ensure technology enables us to effectively connect with our communities.

### **Risk Impact**

- 6.4 Whilst this report has no direct impact on the risks identified within the Strategic and Service Delivery Risk Registers, it does mitigate any risk associated with non- compliance with the requirements of the Housing Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman.

## **7.0 Community Impact**

Consultation

7.1 Housing tenants and other customers have been given the opportunity to comment on the action plan

### **Equality and Diversity Impact**

7.2 A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been completed using the Council's draft assessment model and has identified that there are no disproportionate impacts on any groups within the population who display any of the Protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act.

### **Social Value Impact**

7.3 A model for assessing the social value impact will be established.

Environmental Sustainability

7.4 There is no direct Environmental sustainability impact within this report.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

8.1 The consultation process has been successful in obtaining generally positive responses from housing customers through a variety of media.

8.2 The Strategy Action plan provides a robust framework for creating meaningful and effective communication with tenants and also ensuring compliance with regulation, which has the approval of the customers that provided a response.

9.0 Background Papers