
REPORT TO:	Housing and Community Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 13
DATE OF MEETING:	14th June 2012	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Operations	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Beverly Wagstaffe (01283 228759)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Strategic Tenancy Strategy	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members note the statutory duty for Local Authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy.
- 1.2 Members agree that a draft Tenancy Strategy be prepared based on the broad principles set-out in this report and that subsequently consultation takes place during the summer.
- 1.3 Members receive a further report in the autumn providing feedback on the consultation and consider a proposed Tenancy Strategy for the district.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To advise Members of the statutory duty Local Authorities now have to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy within 12 months of the publication of the Localism Act 2011. This duty applies to all Local Authorities whether or not they still retain housing stock and is seen as part of authorities' strategic housing role.

3.0 Content

- 3.1 As a result of the Localism Act 2011, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide a Tenancy Strategy by January 2013. This document will need to explain what different types of tenancies will be promoted in the district as well as clarifying the process should tenancies not be renewed.
- 3.2. Members seminars were held during May to inform Members of emerging new housing policy, one part of which was a presentation regarding the Tenancy Strategy and what this might mean for South Derbyshire.
- 3.3 Under the Localism Act, housing associations and Local Authorities may, if they choose, offer new tenants a fixed-term tenancy. Government guidance is that these types of tenancies should be for a minimum of 5-years; however Members may consider that shorter fixed-term tenancies are more appropriate for those living in supported accommodation, such as young persons' accommodation, which is

considered to be a “half-way” house before moving to general-purpose accommodation.

- 3.4 The advantages of offering a fixed-term tenancy is that it provides an opportunity for both the tenant and the provider to review whether their current home meets their needs and if necessary, plan a move to alternative more suitable accommodation, thereby releasing the property to be more appropriately used. There are clearly some disadvantages in so much that it could create uncertainty for households and additional administrative burdens for providers. However, to some extent these can be alleviated if properly managed by the provider.
- 3.5 Members should note that there are only 3,800 social rented homes in the district and that turnover of the stock is relatively low, currently less than 250 lets per year. There are currently 1,600 households on the housing waiting list of which around 1,000 are considered to be in acute housing need which is currently not being met.
- 3.6 Due to timescales officers need to commence consultation on a draft Strategy during the summer giving Members the opportunity to review the outcome of consultation and a proposed Tenancy Strategy in late autumn.
- 3.7 Therefore Members are asked to consider that a consultation Tenancy Strategy be prepared and consulted on giving regards to the following broad principles:-
- Lifetime tenancies continue to be offered to those in sheltered housing/extra care.
 - Initial introductory tenancies continue to be offered to those renting social housing for the first time.
 - Minimum 5-year fixed-term tenancy is offered for all non-sheltered lets.
 - That the Tenancy Strategy sets out the circumstances when fixed-term tenancies should be offered for longer or shorter than 5-years.
 - That the Tenancy Strategy sets out what is considered to be suitable alternative accommodation should the current property be considered inappropriate to meet a household’s needs.
 - That the Tenancy Strategy sets out how a review process may work utilising a principle that an automatic renewal is the norm where there is no significant change in circumstances.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None at this stage, although there will be additional costs of administration in setting up a process for tenancy reviews.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The Tenancy Strategy will contribute towards to the Council strategic objective to ensure that households have access towards a range of affordable homes.