

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	8.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Status	Open
Category	Key Decision		
Subject:	Tenancy Strategy		
Report by:	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager		
Other Officers Involved	Head of Housing Housing Needs Manager		
Director	Director of Development		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor A. Tomlinson, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration Councillor K. Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities
SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.

The Tenancy Strategy has been written to support the District's neighbourhoods to be sustainable, and to provide residents with settled and stable homes. In addition to basic housing requirements, other factors that help to improve well-being include the neighbourhood and security of tenure, and the Strategy therefore supports the Council's corporate aim of contributing towards the improving health of the District. The policy also sets out the factors which the Council expects its registered provider partners to have regard when formulating their own Tenancy Policies. By doing this, the Council hopes to encourage a uniform approach across the District and ensure that services are delivered in a fair and equitable way, whilst maximising access to affordable housing.

TARGETS

Corporate target SI 04 – Produce Tenancy Strategy in line with new statutory requirements.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The production of a Tenancy Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011. Through the Strategy, the Council hopes to influence the way that our registered provider partners let their homes, by informing their policies and ensuring that affordable housing meets the needs of our communities.

THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new duty on local housing authorities to produce and publish a Tenancy Strategy for their area. The Act requires that a strategy must be adopted within a year of the relevant sections of the Act coming into force, making the statutory deadline for Tenancy Strategies *Tuesday 15th January 2013*. The development of the Tenancy Strategy is a target within Bolsover's corporate plan.
- 1.2 There is no prescription on content or format, but Tenancy Strategies must set out the matters to which Registered Providers are to have regard when formulating their own Tenancy Policies. Tenancy Strategies will therefore influence the way that all social housing in an area is allocated and let, not just that belonging to the local council.
- 1.3 The Localism Act stipulates that local authorities must consult with Registered Providers on the development of their tenancy strategy. Following approval by SAMT and Cabinet, the draft strategy was circulated to Registered Providers with stock in Bolsover District, and the draft was presented to partners at the bi-annual Registered Provider Forum, held on the 12th November. No comments were received.
- 1.4 The draft strategy has been approved by managers within Housing Services, who were given the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the draft document.
- 1.5 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing Management were briefed on the draft strategy, and Cabinet members were given the opportunity to contribute to the draft prior to it being circulated to Registered Providers for consultation. The draft strategy was also presented to the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee on the 27th November.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 Registered providers (RPs) were required to have their Tenancy Policies in place by April 2012. As Bolsover did not have a Tenancy Strategy at this time, RPs did not have to ensure that their policy reflected the Council's strategy. RPs will have already made decisions about the approach that they will take in relation to fixed term tenancies and how they will let their homes, and many are tied into commitments with the Homes and Communities Agency, meaning that they will be expected to offer fixed term tenancies.
- 2.2 There is therefore some uncertainty about how much influence Tenancy Strategies will have on the way that RP partners allocate and

let their homes. Many local authorities are therefore using their strategies to set out the guidelines that they expect their RP partners to have regard to when offering fixed term tenancies themselves, even though they do not support them politically.

- 2.3 The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager post was vacant for a period of 6 months, and as such little progress was made in the development of the Council's Tenancy Strategy prior to the replacement officer starting in post at the beginning of October. The timescale for producing the Council's Tenancy Strategy has therefore been very tight, and there is little flexibility if the statutory deadline is to be met. To meet the deadline, the draft Tenancy Strategy must gain Executive approval at January's Executive meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial costs anticipated in relation to the Tenancy Strategy.

Legal: Bolsover District Council's Tenancy Strategy does not change the existing position of the Council in terms of its policies and it does not propose a shift in policy position. As such there are considered to be no legal implications.

Human Resources: The Strategy will need to be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Anticipated work demands in relation to this can be met by existing staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 1. Executive approve the attached draft Tenancy Strategy.**
- 2. It be noted that the Chairman of the Council has agreed that the call-in procedure as set out in 4.5.16 of the Council's Constitution shall not apply.**

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

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ATTACHMENTS: **Y**
FILE REFERENCE:
SOURCE DOCUMENT: