

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 18th November 2024

Tenancy Strategy 2024-2029

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Victoria Dawson, Assistant Director – Housing Management Joanne Wilson, Housing Strategy and Development Officer

PURPOSE / SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To inform Scrutiny of the proposed amendments to the Tenancy Strategy, which was last approved in 2018.
 - To receive Member oversight of the final draft prior to submission to Executive and Council.
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REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 placed a new duty on local housing authorities to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy; these provisions came into force on 15 January 2012. The strategy must set out the matters to which Registered Providers of social housing are to have regard in formulating their tenancy policies. These tenancy policies will explain how Registered Providers (RPs) intend to implement the range of new flexibilities introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 The Council adopted its Tenancy Strategy in January 2013, reviewed in 2018, and it is now due for further renewal. A desk top review of the strategy has taken place.
- 1.3 The Tenancy Strategy provides a framework for how social rented housing is provided in the district, it also links with the Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Code of Guidance and outlines the Council's position on the following social housing reforms:
 - Affordable Rent
 - Flexible Fixed term Tenancies
 - Discharge of Homelessness Duty by offer of accommodation in the private rented sector
 - Mutual exchanges

- Succession Rights.
- 1.4 Under review, amendments have been identified to keep in line with current legislation and local changes, key wording includes;
- Changes to Mutual Exchange as a result of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and revised Consumer Regulations by Regulator of Social Housing
 - Greater clarity on the scope of the Tenancy Strategy and the national and local legislative framework
 - Updated Principles as a result of changes to the Council's Corporate Plan
 - Clarification as to who is responsible for implementation and how the Strategy will be monitored/updated
 - Expectations of Registered Providers
 - A glossary of terms

Furthermore, the statistical data embedded in the Strategy has been updated.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The Council's outgoing Tenancy Strategy was adopted in 2018, and as such, is due for renewal. This is timely due to the enactment of the launch of the Regulator for Social Housing's new Consumer Standards in April 2024. In particular this required further clarity to the expectations in relation to 'mutual exchange.'
- 2.2 The attached revised draft (appendix 1) takes account of these legislative changes and seeks to learn from best practice elsewhere by providing further detail and clarification of the various terminology and parameters that Registered Providers must adhere to.
- 2.3 The amendments are quoting legislation and bringing up to date the statistical data.
- 2.4 Attached at appendix 2 for reference is the previous version, so Members can see the changes made. Due to the volume of changes, which include reformatting, it was felt a 'track-changed' document may prove less readable.
- 2.5 Registered Providers holding stock within the District have been consulted as part of the process and given the opportunity to comment on the revised draft.
- 2.6 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed in January 2013 when the Strategy was adopted, an updated EIA will be completed as part of the review.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is required to produce a Tenancy Strategy as per the Localism Act 2011, and to keep said document under regular review.
- 3.2 Scrutiny on the development of the revised strategy for 2024-2029 forms a core role of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 An alternative option would be not to review the Tenancy Strategy, however as the current strategy is outdated, this option was rejected due to the fact that the Council would not be fulfilling its legal duty.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee note the proposed amendments to the Tenancy Strategy and provide feedback where necessary.

Approved by Portfolio Holder for Housing – Cllr. Peake

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details: None from this specific report.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details: Not to have a Tenancy Strategy would be illegal under the Localism Act 2011.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment: Yes No

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal / report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: No direct environmental implications from this document, as it relates to tenancy management rather than the physical homes.

Staffing: Yes No

Details: Existing employees will develop and implement the Strategy, therefore there are no Human Resources implications.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	<p>No</p>

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	<p>None, this is aimed at registered providers to inform them of what the Council is doing with regards to tenancies and affordable rents etc., and what the Council expects from the registered providers.</p>
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Details: Relevant Portfolio holder and SLT members consulted as part of refresh. Draft sent to all RPs within stock in the District for comment.</p>

<p>Links to Council Aims: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing.</p>
<p>The Tenancy Strategy will support the delivery of the following elements of the Council Corporate Plan Bolsover District: The Future 2024-2028 Ambition 2024-2028:</p> <p>Aim: Our Customers by providing excellent and accessible services Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people • Improving the customer experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services <p>Aim: Our Housing by delivering social and private sector housing growth Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling Housing Growth by increasing the supply, quality, and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord

Links to Council Aims: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing.

- Maintaining and improving property and housing management standards, and ensuring that standards and living conditions in the district contribute towards better health outcomes for all

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1.	Tenancy Strategy 2024-2029
2.	Tenancy Strategy 2018

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).