

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 29TH July 2010

Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan

Subject: Housing Service Standards 2010, Housing Charter and Local Offer to Tenants

Officer contact for further information:

Alan Hall – Director of Housing (01992 564004)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That consideration be given to the attached draft report to the Housing Portfolio Holder and the accompanying;

 (a) Housing Service Standards attached as Appendix 1; and
 (b) Housing Charter attached as Appendix 2;**
- (2) That consideration be given to the proposed methodology for formulating the Local Offer to tenants required by the Tenant Services Authority's new Housing Regulatory Framework, as proposed by the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at its meeting to be held on 20th July 2010 - with their proposals being reported orally at the Scrutiny Panel meeting; and**
- (3) That the Scrutiny Panel provides any comments on the draft report to the Housing Portfolio report and appendices, and the proposed methodology for formulating the Local Offer to tenants, prior to consideration by the Housing Portfolio Holder.**

Report

1. A self-explanatory draft report to the Housing Portfolio Holder, reviewing the Housing Service Standards agreed in 2007 (amended in 2009), and performance against those standards, at Appendix 1, and the Housing Charter at Appendix 2 is attached.
2. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the report and appendices in detail and provide the Director of Housing with any comments prior to submission to the Portfolio Holder.

Housing Regulatory Framework – Local Offer

3. In April 2010, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) introduced its new Housing Regulatory Framework. In addition to setting out National Standards, with which the Council must comply, the Regulatory Framework also requires Registered Providers of Housing (including the Council) to consult with tenants and publish, by April 2011, a "Local Offer", setting out the service that tenants can expect, and explain how the Council will meet the TSA's National Standards.

4. The nature of the Local Offer is very much left to local discretion but, crucially, must be based on what the Council's tenants expect.

5. At its meeting to be held on the 20th July 2010, the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be considering the draft Housing Portfolio Holder Report, together with its methodology for considering and formulating with senior housing officers the Local Offer.

6. In his report to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Director of Housing has suggested that the Federation forms a small Local Offer Sub-Group to work with senior housing officers to discuss and develop the Local Offer, and to put forward, in the first instance, a draft Local Offer to the Federation and Housing Portfolio Holder for consideration.

7. Once the draft Offer has been agreed by the Federation and Housing Portfolio Holder, it is suggested that all the Council's tenants be consulted on the Local Offer - through the "Housing News" - with an invitation to comment on the Draft Local Offer. The Federation and Housing Portfolio Holder could then consider the views received from tenants, before agreeing the final Local Offer before 1st April 2011.

8. It is suggested that, in principle the revised Housing Service Standards and the Housing Charter could form the "core element" of the Local Offer, supplemented with additional proposals for the forthcoming year, that would be discussed with the proposed Local Offer Sub Group, including proposed housing improvements for the year.

9. The views of the Federation on the methodology for formulating the Local Offer, and their comments on the draft Housing Portfolio Holder report and appendices, will be reported orally at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Reason for decision:

The Housing Service Standards and Housing Charter were first introduced in 2007. Since that time, they have been reviewed once (in 2009). Following consultation with, and review by, the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, it is proposed that they be amended as set out. It is good practice to review the Housing Service Standards and performance against the standards annually.

Options considered and rejected:

(1) Not to review or update the Housing Service Standards and/or the Housing Charter.

(2) To make different changes/additions/deletions to the Housing Service Standards and/or the Housing Charter than those proposed.

Consultation undertaken:

By the time the Scrutiny Panel meets, the draft report and appendices should have been considered by the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on the 20th July 2010. Any comments arising from that meeting will be reported orally for the Scrutiny Panel's information.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Nil

Personnel: Nil

Land: Nil

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None
Key Decision reference: Not for Housing Scrutiny Panel