

# Decision by Portfolio Holder

Report reference: C/ /200 - 0

Date of report: TBA



Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan

Author: Alan Hall, Director of Housing  
Committee Secretary:

Subject: Housing Service Standards 2007/8

## Decision:

(1) That, following consultation with senior Housing staff, the Housing Customer Perspective Programme Group, the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Housing Service Standards attached as Appendix 1 and the Housing Charter at Appendix 2 be approved and publicised in accordance with the ways set out in Appendix 3;

(2) That the Housing Directorate's performance against the Housing Service Standards in 2007/8 be considered in 2008/9 and the Service Standards reviewed at that time accordingly; and

(3) That the Housing Service Standards for 2008/9 incorporate standards relating to private sector housing, following the integration of this service within the Housing Directorate.

<b>ADVISORY NOTICE:</b> <i>A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a prejudicial interest. A Portfolio Holder with a personal interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.</i>	
I have read and approve/do not approve (delete as appropriate) the above decision:	
Comments/further action required:	
Signed:	Date:
<i>Personal interest declared by Portfolio Holder/ conflict of interest declared by any other consulted Cabinet Member:</i>	<i>Dispensation granted by Standards Committee: Yes/No or n/a</i>
<b>Office use only:</b> Call-in period begins:	Expiry of Call-in period:

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## Reason for decision:

The draft Housing Service Standards were considered in detail by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation. It is good practice to consult on, produce and publicise service standards.

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**Options considered and rejected:**

- (1) Not to produce and publicise Housing Service Standards
- (2) To formulate different Housing Service Standards

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## Background Report:

1. Housing Services has worked to a number of standards relating to the service it provides to its customers (mainly tenants, leaseholders and housing applicants), many of which have followed consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation. A number of these standards have been included within the Tenants Handbook and other documents and leaflets over the years, and performance is regularly reported to, and reviewed by, customers, the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and members. However, to date, the Council has not produced one document that brings together all of its Housing Service Standards.
2. Therefore, following consultation with senior Housing staff, the Director of Housing has produced a set of proposed Housing Service Standards at Appendix 1. Appendix 1 also includes associated performance data for 2006/7 where applicable and available.
3. In addition, the Council adopted a Housing Charter some time ago, which sets out the Council's approach and ethos to the delivery of its housing service to customers. At the recent Charter Mark assessment, the independent assessor suggested that the Housing Charter be reviewed, even if no changes are necessary. The current Housing Charter is attached as Appendix 2, and no changes are proposed.
4. It is recommended that the Housing Service Standards and the Housing Charter be approved.
5. Draft Housing Service Standards were considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel on the 25 October 2007 and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on the 29 November 2007. The view of the Federation was as follows:

[ To be inserted ]

6. The Service Standards have also been considered by the Housing Customer Interface Project Team, which comprises representatives from each section within the Housing Directorate - and the Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation – and which is in the process of considering all aspects of “interfaces” that individual sections of Housing have with its customers. In a programmed way, existing housing policies, practices, information, documentation and standard letters are being discussed and challenged by the Group who are formulating recommendations and a Customer Perspective Action Plan, setting out suggested improvements to the way Housing interfaces with its customers.
7. Once approved, it is important that the Service Standards are publicised to customers. Whilst the primary method will be through the provision of an additional leaflet to all existing tenants (for inclusion within their Tenants Handbook) and to all new tenants, it is suggested that appropriate sections of the Service Standards are provided to customers at appropriate interfaces. The proposed ways of publicising the Service Standards are set out in Appendix 3.
8. Appendix 1 provides, for information, (where available) the Housing Directorate's performance against the proposed Housing Service Standards in 2006/7. It is proposed that performance against the Service Standards in 2007/8 are considered at the July 2008 meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel and that the Service Standards are reviewed at that time, taking account of past performance.
9. Under the Top Management Restructure, it has been agreed that the private sector housing function be incorporated within the Housing Directorate. This transfer has not yet taken place. Therefore, it is suggested that the Housing Service Standards for 2008/9 incorporate standards relating to private sector housing.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

As set out in the detailed report above.

**Resource implications:**

Budget Provision: Nil

Personnel: Nil

Land: Nil

Council Plan/BVPP Ref : Homes & Neighbourhoods

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: Nil

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act: N/A

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Portfolio Holder:**