

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd October 2012

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 – 2014

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Del Booth
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduces a number of housing reforms including the ability for stock holding local authorities and social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies and changes to the allocation of housing and the law relating to homelessness.
- 1.2 The Localism Act places a duty on the Local Authority to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013 that sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy.
- 1.3 This Tenancy Strategy has been developed in close consultation with our Registered Providers, stakeholders and Members.
- 1.4 The Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the matters to which Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing in the District should have regard when formulating their tenancy policies.
- 1.5 The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has produced a draft regulatory framework for social housing in England which takes effect from April 2012. Currently there is a specific expectation that social housing providers shall publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions and tackling tenancy fraud. When formulating their policies Registered Providers of social housing should have due regard to the Tenancy Strategy set by the local authority.
- 1.6 The Strategy now comes before Members for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members resolve that the Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 1) be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.2 There are no financial implications for the Council in implementing the Tenancy Strategy.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Localism Act 2012 has placed a duty on Local Authorities to introduce a Tenancy Strategy. This Strategy sets out the matters to which the registered providers of social housing in the District are to have regard to in formulating their tenancy policies relating to:
- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the criteria to consider when reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term.
 - How disposals of stock should be managed
 - How Bromsgrove District Council will give consideration to new government guidance in relation to the allocation of social housing.
- 3.4 The Regulatory Framework for social housing produced by the TSA requires social housing providers to develop a Tenancy Policy.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 Although this is a new strategy there are no service or operational implications arising from the implementation of the Tenancy Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council.
- 3.6 All social housing providers in the District will be required to have regard to this strategy in the formalisation of their own individual Tenancy Policies.

- 3.7 The Tenancy Strategy is intended to provide guidance to social housing providers, when developing their tenancy policies and practices, upon the Council's aims and objectives to produce lettings that meet local housing need and improve market functioning. The legislation requires the strategy to explain:
- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a certain term, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the criteria to consider when reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term.
- 3.10 The aim of the strategy is to provide the right home, at the right time and in the right place, by making best use of limited stock by offering tenancies not necessarily for life but supporting sustainable communities.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders in the production of the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Bromsgrove hosted a stakeholder event to facilitate the development the Tenancy Strategy.
- 3.12 The Tenancy Strategy is intended to be an overarching Strategy for Registered Providers to take into consideration when making decisions about tenancies and allocations. The Strategy makes reference at paragraph 5.16 to Registered Providers making best use of properties adapted for those with physical disabilities, in addition, paragraph 9.1 sets out the Council's expectation that Registered Providers will have regard to the Equalities Act 2010 when framing their tenancy policies.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that fixed term tenancies may result in increased homelessness. We have stated within the Strategy that we expect Registered Providers to make every effort to avoid a household becoming homeless, but ultimately, if no alternative property is found the household may approach the Council for assistance under homelessness legislation.

There may also be a reduction in the number of properties becoming available due to existing tenants being concerned about the changes to

tenancies and housing benefits. We will need to effectively monitor this and provide clear advice to residents on the changes.

- 4.2 There is a risk of repeat homelessness linked to the placing of more people into the private rented sector. We are considering how we assess that the people we place in the private rented sector are able to maintain that type of tenancy with a view to developing a Discharge of the Homelessness Duty into the Private Sector Policy. We will also need to ensure we maintain and strengthen our relationships with private landlords.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Tenancy strategy 2012 - 2014

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Localism Act 2011

Regulatory framework for social housing in England April 2010

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: A.Glennie – Strategic Housing and Enabling Officer

E Mail: a.glennie@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk