

Overview and Scrutiny Board 23rd April 2012

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 – 2014

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
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 local authorities and social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies with limited security of tenure 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 within 12 months of its enactment.
- 1.3 A Tenancy Strategy has been developed in close consultation with our Registered Providers, stakeholders and the Strategic and Housing Management Department of Redditch Borough Council.
- 1.4 The 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.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board note the report and the contents of Appendix 1 Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy 2012-2014.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 23rd April 2012

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Localism Act 2011 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 regarded 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 term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy
- 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.
- 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:
- What kind of tenancies should be offered.
 - Circumstances in which the landlord will grant a tenancy of a particular kind.
 - Where a tenancy is set for a term, the length of the term.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 23rd April 2012

- Circumstances where the landlord will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy.
- 3.8 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

- 3.09 Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders in the production of the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Bromsgrove hosted a stakeholder event to facilitate maximum levels of uniformity in respect of the Tenancy Strategies being developed across Worcestershire.
- 3.10 The Strategy sets out how the Council expects partner Registered Providers (RP's) to meet the housing needs of the District and make best use of existing stock. It recognises that those on low incomes may be adversely affected by the introduction of affordable rents and makes recommendations as to how Registered Providers should advise households prior to allocation so that they can make informed choices. In addition it is likely that mainly middle aged tenants whose children have left home, which may mean predominantly more women than men, will be affected adversely by an RP's decision to end a fixed term tenancy. However, the shortage of affordable accommodation in the District justifies the need to ensure scarce properties are occupied by those who need it most and thereby making best use of the existing social housing stock. The Strategy sets out the Council's expectation that RP's will avoid making households homeless as a result of this wherever possible.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that the number of properties that are re-let will reduce, due to people being nervous 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 will need to assess that the people we place in the private rented sector are able to maintain that type of tenancy. We will also need to ensure we maintain and strengthen our relationships with private landlords.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 23rd April 2012

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Tenancy strategy 2012 - 2014

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Localism Act 2011

Regulatory framework for social housing in England April 2010

7. KEY

TSA – Tenant Services Authority

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Angie Heighway – Head of Community Services

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