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| Subject: | Update on annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010 and development of local service offers and plan for resident involvement in the annual report for 2011 | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 24 January 2011 | | |
| Report of: | Strategic Director Place | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Carol Jenkins | Tel: 29-3832 |
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| Wards Affected: | All | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on progress in implementing the improvement plans set out in the annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders for the year ended 31 March 2010 and in developing local service offers with residents. It reports tenants' and leaseholders' feedback on the 2010 summary annual report and proposes a plan and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in producing and scrutinising an annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the progress in implementing improvement plans included in the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2010 highlighted in Appendix 1 to this report.
- (2) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the proposed plan and timetable set out in Appendix 2 to this report for involving residents in producing and scrutinising the annual report to tenants and leaseholders for the year ending 31 March 2011.
- (3) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the progress in involving residents in developing and agreeing local offers for service delivery set out in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.12 to this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders for the year ended 31 March 2010 was produced with tenants in line with the requirements of the current regulator for social housing landlords, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). That report set out our improvement plans in response to tenants' and leaseholders' views of our performance against the TSA's standards, gained in a variety of ways which sought to involve as wide a range of residents as possible in the production and scrutiny of the report. Appendix 1 to this report highlights examples of the progress already made in meeting our improvement plans.

3.2 The full version of the annual report set out in detail how we met the TSA's regulatory standards introduced on 1 April 2010, any gaps, our improvement plans to fill those gap and our offer to tenants against the standards for this year. This was our self assessment for the TSA's purposes. It was sent to all tenant and resident associations and all tenants and leaseholders who requested a copy, and made available in our offices and on our website. A shorter, summary report was distributed to all tenants and leaseholders in September 2010 with the autumn edition of Homing In.

Tenants' and leaseholders' feedback on the 2010 report

3.3 Within the published reports and in Homing In we invited tenants and leaseholders to tell us via their housing office, by email, post or in a feedback form on our website what they thought of the reports and what they would like in a future year's report. Three of the four residents who commented on the summary annual report said they found the information useful. One suggested the report could be improved by consulting as widely as possible beforehand and suggested contacting residents who do not attend meetings by email for their views. In fact, we had done this by making a consultation draft of the 2010 report available for comment by all tenants and leaseholders and emailing a link to the report and the feedback questionnaire to all residents on our tenant and leaseholder involvement database who had given us an email address asking for their views.

3.4 Three residents commented on the length of the summary report: one thought it was not the right length but more for the recycling bin; two said it was about the right length but one added that if anything it should be a little shorter. We had very little demand for, and no feedback on, the full version of the published annual report.

Proposals for 2011 annual report

3.5 The government has announced its intention to disband the TSA through the Localism Bill, but in the meantime the current regulatory framework with the requirement to produce an annual report to tenants and share this with the TSA remains in place. Government's review of social housing regulation published in October 2010 proposed that the requirement to send an annual report to the regulator should be repealed, but that the obligation to publish an annual report to tenants should continue as part of the routine provision of performance information to tenants.

3.6 An outline plan and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in producing the annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011 is attached at Appendix 2. As last year, the objective is to involve as many tenants and leaseholders as we can in producing and scrutinising the report. We will again invite residents to contribute to reporting our performance and progress in meeting our improvement plans in their own words. In response to the resident feedback detailed in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 above, we will aim to give tenants and leaseholders more notice of a consultation draft for the next report and more time to feed back their comments. The longer timescale available this year will enable us to do that. We also intend to produce just one short report for 2011 which is no longer than the 2010 summary report.

3.7 The 2011 annual report to tenants and leaseholders will also reflect the council's change to a commissioning model and resident involvement in our housing commissioning investment priorities, which are: providing value for money landlord services, meeting Decent Homes by the end of 2013, building new council homes and estates master plan, improving the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of homes, ensuring that health and safety obligations are met, reflecting residents' priorities and maximising inward investment. In addition, it will report on the performance compact for Housing & Social Inclusion to deliver housing management services, which is to be developed with the Lead Commissioner, Housing by 1 April 2011.

Developing and agreeing with tenants local offers for service delivery
3.8 The 2010 annual report outlined our proposed approach and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in developing local service offers, which had been agreed with the Housing Management Consultative Committee in June 2010. We have tried to engage as many residents as possible in this process, using community events, the tenant and leaseholder involvement database and other means to find out what matters most to residents and what standards we should set. We will use this information to create a new set of service pledges with our resident working groups. The pledges will give clear guidance on what tenants and leaseholders can expect from us and what we will do if we fail to meet our commitments, replacing our current service charters. They will meet the TSA's requirement to develop and agree local offers with tenants and implement them by 1 April 2011, which still applies.

3.9 We invited all tenants and leaseholders to four 'Tell us what you think!' consultation events held at varying times and at different venues across the city in October and November. These events were publicised in Homing In, on posters distributed to all tenant and resident associations and at housing offices. Residents who attended were asked about their priorities for the range of services that we deliver and to give us their ideas and opinions by talking to staff, using a video diary and writing down their ideas for how we can improve our services.

3.10 In December, questionnaires on nine different areas of the council's housing management and allocations service were sent to tenants and leaseholders to find out what they think of our current standards in those areas and how they think they could be improved. A random sample of

residents was taken from our consultation database of tenants and leaseholders who had expressed an interest in completing questionnaires about specific areas of our service, such as their local environment or anti-social behaviour. Questionnaires were also sent to samples of people on waiting lists for housing, sheltered accommodation and garages and car parking spaces and to people who had recent experience of a specific service area, such as tenants who had recently moved into a property. In addition, members of resident working groups e.g. the Repairs & Maintenance Monitoring Group were sent the questionnaires and resident representatives were also asked if they would like to receive questionnaires at the November City Assembly. Posters and leaflets in housing offices publicised the questionnaires and they were made available at our housing offices, on our website and to any tenant or leaseholder who requested them.

- 3.11 The information from the questionnaires is being analysed in January. That analysis and residents' feedback from the consultation events will then be used to draft the service pledges with the appropriate resident working groups in January and February. They will cover tenancy management, anti-social behaviour, leasehold management, lettings, repairs and maintenance, income management, the estates service, car parks and garages, sheltered housing and resident involvement. The resident groups will also discuss how we can report our performance so that residents can monitor that we are meeting those pledges. We will work with the housing commissioning team and use resident feedback from the 'Tell us what you think!' consultation events and questionnaires to inform development of the performance compact.
- 3.12 An additional meeting of the Housing Management Consultative Committee will be requested for late March so the Committee can discuss the draft pledges and make their recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Housing before she approves the final pledges. The service pledges will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2011.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The annual report for the year ending 31 March 2010 and the improvement plans within it were produced with the involvement of a wide number of tenants, leaseholders and representatives including their feedback on a consultation draft. Both versions of the report were scrutinised by the Housing Management Consultative Committee, who recommended them for approval. The proposed plan and timetable for involving tenants and leaseholders in producing the annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011 are based on the plan agreed for the previous year, with more time allowed for residents' comments and input in response to their feedback.
- 4.2 The plan and timetable for agreeing local service offers were discussed and agreed with the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group (TCMG) at a resident involvement workshop on 27 April 2010, presented to the City Assembly of tenants and leaseholders and Area Housing Management Panel meetings

in May and June 2010 and noted by the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 14 June 2010. Service pledges are being developed with extensive tenant and leaseholder consultation as outlined in this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report. The cost of producing the annual reports, resident involvement and progressing the improvement plans set out in the 2010 annual report are met within existing Housing Revenue Account Budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 7 January 2011

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By section 204 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 the regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), may require a provider to prepare annual reports assessing the registered provider's performance by reference to standards set by the regulator. Failure to comply with the regulator's request without reasonable excuse is an offence punishable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £5000. The TSA has directed that an annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011 should be made available to tenants by 1 October 2011. The plan and timetable proposed in the report will assist the Council in complying with its legal obligations. No adverse Human Rights Act implications are considered to arise from the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 11 January 2011

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The annual report and development of local service offers have been undertaken in line with the TSA's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard, which requires registered providers to understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants in meeting all of the standards, including in relation to the seven equality strands and tenants with additional support needs. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed on work to meet the TSA's requirements.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The TSA standards promote the use of engagement and partnership with tenants to support sustainable communities. The Neighbourhood and Community standard includes a requirement for registered providers to co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic well being in the areas where they own properties. The annual report includes the council's performance in this area and improvement plans and local service offers will be developed with regard to this standard.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The annual report and improvement plans include the council's performance on dealing with anti-social behaviour and a local offer service pledge is being developed in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 It is currently a regulatory requirement of the TSA as set out in its regulatory framework that the council should:
- involve tenants in producing and scrutinising the annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011 and make it available to tenants by no later than 1 October 2011;
 - offer tenants opportunities to agree how some services can be tailored to meet local priorities. Where tenants want local tailoring and choices to reflect their priorities, the council should consult meaningfully with tenants and act reasonably to develop a local offer in response. Local offers for service delivery should be in place by 1 April 2011.

Where agreement cannot be reached on local offers, the TSA states it would encourage the landlord and tenants to seek independent mediation. The TSA states it wants co-regulation between landlords and tenants to work to resolve any issues: 'Only in exceptional circumstances (such as when the provider is not delivering services in line with the outcomes set out in the TSA standards and has failed to address this) and where it is reasonable and proportionate will the TSA consider more formal intervention'.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The TSA's regulatory framework continues to apply pending new legislation and it has committed to work closely with the Audit Commission.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Examples of progress made in meeting improvement plans set out in the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010
2. Plan and timetable for 2011 annual performance report to council tenants and leaseholders

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. *The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010*
Tenant Services Authority, March 2010

Examples of progress made in meeting improvement plans set out in the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2010

| Planned improvement | Progress to date |
|---|---|
| Resident involvement and empowerment | |
| Customer service, choice and complaints | |
| We will carry out a service improvement programme for sheltered housing agreed with residents and deliver a revised out of hours service for the sheltered service | An action plan has been developed with tenant representatives on the Sheltered Housing Action Group (SHAG). A consultation document was presented to SHAG on 9 August 2010 and all proposals have since been agreed. Officers and tenant reps worked together on developing proposals for a new out of hours service which is due to go to Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) in February 2011. Consultation is also being carried out with sheltered residents through developing a service pledge for sheltered housing as a local service offer. |
| Involvement and empowerment | |
| We will use the resident involvement database to involve residents on the issues they are interested in, and encourage residents from under-represented groups to get involved | Information stored on our database on how residents told us in the tenant and leaseholder involvement survey that they would like to be involved has been used to seek residents' views on the draft Resident Involvement Strategy and to contact residents about Tell us what you think! events and select samples for the service pledge surveys. In developing local service offers we have tried to engage younger residents by offering activities and competitions for children as well as events at various times and locations. Questionnaires were sent to a cross section of residents from the resident involvement database to reach all equalities and diversity groups. |
| Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants | |
| We are committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity. We will continue to build up a better understanding of our residents' needs and tailor our services to meet them | We have increased the equalities, diversity and care and support needs data recorded on our database from tenancy check visits, the tenant and leaseholder involvement survey and other sources to better understand our resident profile and their needs. This is being used to identify vulnerable residents in case of emergency, for example, and to record where a personal emergency evacuation plan has been produced with residents. We are revising our procedures, guidance and reports and introducing new training for Housing Management staff to check and add to data during tenancy check visits and at |

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| | sign up. |
| Home | |
| Quality of accommodation | |
| We will bring 74% of tenants' homes up to Decent Homes Standard by 31 March 2011, with a £24 million programme of improvements in 2010/11 | The programme of improvements and kitchen and bathroom installations has increased the percentage of tenants' homes which meet Decent Homes Standard from 60.5% at 31 March 2010 to 70%.at 31 December 2010. |
| Repairs and maintenance | |
| We will maintain and develop resident involvement at all levels of the repairs partnership | Residents from the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group and the Asset Management Panel are actively involved in monitoring and managing the repairs partnership with Mears through their membership of the Core Group. Residents have also been nominated to the Partnership Group that operationally manages the partnership and they will start attending that group in January 2011. |
| Tenancy | |
| Allocations | |
| A tenant led group is reviewing the choice based lettings system and allocations policy, including exploring ways to relieve overcrowding. We will consult tenants and homeseekers in the city about any proposed changes | Residents from the tenant led group which conducted the review presented the recommended changes to the allocations policy to HMCC on 8 November. These have now gone to full city consultation with residents and wider stakeholders in the city for a 12 week period. |
| Tenure | |
| We will continue our work on identifying and dealing with people fraudulently living in council housing | A report to HMCC on 8 November set out how Housing Management prevents, detects and resolves tenancy fraud and our action plan and progress following an internal audit review. HMCC agreed that the £30,000 government grant to improve the prevention and detection of tenancy fraud should be used to fund equipment to introduce photographic records of tenant identity for new tenants. This was confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Housing at her 5 January 2011 meeting and will now be implemented. |

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| Neighbourhood and community | |
| Neighbourhood management | |
| We will develop and agree with residents service pledges on the estates service and tenancy management, including grounds maintenance, as part of 'local offers' | Service pledges covering the estates service and tenancy management are being developed with tenants' and leaseholders' input through events, questionnaires and working with resident groups as set out in the main body of this report. The resident-led review of grounds maintenance with the Estates Service Monitoring Group ran 5 grounds maintenance pilot areas involving resident surveys from September – December 2010 and reported progress to HMCC in December. The project has made good progress and already implemented some positive changes to service arrangements, delivering better value for money. We will now consider wildlife and bio-diversity when completing works, such as planting wild flowers and ensuring new shrub planting is suitable for wildlife. |
| Local area co-operation | |
| We will work together with residents and other organisations to help make your neighbourhood a better place to live and let you know how we do that | Tenants who trained as resident assessors and took part in the Rate your Estate pilots reported back to the tenants and leaseholders' City Assembly in November on the success of this initiative in making estates a better place to live. All residents have also been updated through Homing In. A full report on the Turning the Tide social inclusion pilot to improve neighbourhoods is included elsewhere on this HMCC agenda. |
| Anti-social behaviour | |
| We will implement the national standards for dealing with anti-social behaviour | In October we implemented new Home Office standards promoting a consistent, victim and witness focused approach in responding to reports of anti-social behaviour on a multi-agency basis, including Housing Management and Housing Strategy, Sussex Police and the Anti Social Behaviour Casework team. These were reported to HMCC in November and incorporate the views and feedback gathered from tenants to date. Our response to tackling anti-social behaviour is being developed further with tenants through the Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group and local service offer for anti-social behaviour. |
| Value for money | |
| We will get better value for money in repairs and works to empty homes | We have reduced the average base cost of repairs to empty homes in between lettings by approximately 14% since the start of the Mears partnership on 1 April 2010. |

The annual report for the year ending 31 March 2011 will report fully on progress in meeting our improvement plans in 2010/11.

**Plan and timetable for 2011 annual performance report
to council tenants and leaseholders**

| Date | Action |
|---------------|---|
| February 2011 | Ask tenants and leaseholders for suggestions on content of 2011 annual report in Homing In, give rough outline plan and timetable and brief progress update on 2010 report actions |
| April - May | Produce consultation draft report with staff |
| May | Advise all tenants and leaseholders through Homing In of how to see consultation draft of 2011 report when available and invite comments and suggestions |
| May | Publicise plan and timetable at City Assembly and invite tenant reps to send short quotes for report on progress and achievements of their groups |
| May - June | Update Area Panels on plan and timetable and invite tenant reps to send short quotes for report on progress and achievements of their groups |
| June | Issue consultation draft report |
| June | Circulate draft report to all tenant and resident associations and other resident groups for scrutiny and comments with feedback form |
| June | Put draft report on council website with feedback form and email tenants and leaseholders on the resident involvement database with an email address with the link and request feedback |
| June | Make copies of draft report available at housing offices and send to residents on request |
| June/July | Seek to engage residents who are under-represented in existing resident groups e.g. younger residents, BME residents through Facebook and other means |
| June/July | Officers attending resident meetings to discuss draft report |
| July | Deadline for comments on draft report |
| early Aug | Produce final draft report |
| Aug | Homing In Tenant Editorial Board to comment on final draft |
| early Sept | Housing Management Consultative Committee to scrutinise final draft |
| Sept | Cabinet Member for Housing to approve final report |
| Sept | Printing and distribution of report to all tenants and leaseholders |
| 1 Oct | Deadline for publication of report |