

Subject:	Annual Report 2015		
Date of Meeting:	17 June 2015		
Report of:	Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafe	Tel: 01273 293201
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The council is required under the current regulatory framework for social housing landlords, to publish a 'timely and relevant' Annual Report for our council tenants.
- 1.2 The Annual Report publicises the performance of the services being provided to tenants and leaseholders. It gives a reflection of the work carried in the year and the work that is planned for the year ahead.
- 1.3 Residents have been involved with helping to produce this report for the year ending 31 March 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing and New Homes Committee approve the draft Annual Report 2015 for distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders with the summer edition of Homing In.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The council has produced an Annual Report to council tenants and leaseholders since 2010. As with the other reports, this one has been produced following the guidelines set out under the regulatory framework of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- 3.2 The HCA's requirements are that the Annual Report should:
 - Contain timely and relevant information
 - Contain information on the repairs and maintenance budget
 - Provide support to tenants to build capacity to be more effectively involved.
- 3.3 This year's report takes a similar approach to last year and the key features of the report are:

- The report has been kept at 8 pages to make it relatively accessible to residents
- It includes features on tenancy fraud, Seniors Housing conversions and the building of new homes
- There is a housing highlights page to show the big picture and to illustrate the service improvements we made during 2014/15
- It links the results of the STAR survey (2014) to relevant sections to demonstrate views of tenants
- Residents are featured again in their own words through quotes about their housing service
- A longer version of the report will be made available on the council's website featuring additional articles on neighbourhood initiatives and a tenant's story on how she was helped back into learning

4. DESIGN AND CONTENT

- 4.1 The design and layout are to remain similar to the 2014 report.
- 4.2 The articles and information included in this year's report have been gathered from a number of teams within Housing and they also reflect the work we have done in partnership with residents. It provides updates and progress on what we have been doing and work we are planning for the coming year. This is laid out with headings 'What we have done' and 'What we are doing'.
- 4.3 The report also gives information in the form of statistics to provide a snap shot. This means more information can be included than if articles were written, to give tenants and leaseholders a good overview of how we are performing as a service.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 An article was placed in the spring edition of Homing In and a request placed on Twitter, inviting tenants and leaseholders to let us know what they wanted included in the report.
- 5.2 The Business and Value for Money Service Improvement Group provided feedback on what they would like to include in the Value for Money section of the report. Residents also provided quotes that have been included.
- 5.3 Consultation took place at the citywide Area Panel on 14 May 2015. This meeting was attended by 33 residents from 25 of the 52 active Resident Area Panel Associations across the city. The Panel asked questions and discussions took place as follows:
- Who had put the report together? The member was advised that Housing has produced the draft report and there will be an introduction by the appointed Chair of Housing at the start.

- The validity of the STAR survey results was questioned, because it does not reflect feedback from Resident Associations. They also commented on an external research company undertaking the survey and the costs associated with this. They then also reflected that an in house team would similarly attract costs and risked being accused of bias.

The Panel were advised the STAR survey report had been to Housing Committee in November 2014 and to Area Panels in December 2014. The Panel were also advised the survey was conducted in June 2014 using a postal methodology with a randomly selected sample of 3000 tenants. The survey achieved a response rate of 24% (724 responses) and provides a statistically significant indicator of customer satisfaction on a range of council housing services.

- Concerns were raised about the reference to Seniors Housing conversions in the report, and the dissatisfaction felt amongst some Seniors Housing tenants.

In addition, it was felt that the 90% satisfaction rate with the Seniors Housing service did not reflect this and therefore needed to be changed.

The STAR survey results reflected tenants responses as collated by the independent research company at the time, so could not be changed or mis-reported. The Panel were advised however, the Annual Report will be amended to reflect residents concern about the conversions.

- 5.4 No feedback or comments were received from the Panel on the design of the Annual Report.
- 5.5 Feedback has been received from the Hoving In editorial board which included comments on the design being very clean, fresh and the cover illustrating values such as integrity.
- 5.5.1 Further comments were made on some of the content for example a suggestion to use hyphenation to make the words 'community led' clearer. There were also comments on the importance of leaseholder service charges and a query on the total income and expenditure. The query was responded to, the comments noted and changes made to the report as a result.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Financial Implications:

The costs of producing the annual report are met from the HRA Performance and Improvement Budget for 2015/16. The estimated cost of producing the Annual Report is £1800, excluding staff time.

Any expenditure for 2015/16 and beyond detailed in the Annual Report will be met from current HRA resources for 2015/16 or will form part of the future budget setting approval process.

6.2 Legal Implications:

Paragraph 3.2 sets out the regulator's requirements for the Annual Report to tenants and leaseholders. The draft annual report attached to this report satisfies those requirements. No individual's Human Rights Act rights are adversely affected by the report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Name: Liz Woodley

Date: 21/05/15

6.3 Equalities Implications:

The HCA does not lay out specific requirement for equalities reporting in the Annual Report. However, guidance on this issue is contained in the *Regulatory Framework* which states that registered providers shall:

- treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

The Annual Report illustrates how the council meets that standard and its progress in continuously improving its performance in this area. Alternative formats of the report will also be made available on request or where a need is known.

6.4 Sustainability Implications:

Sustainability issues and the actions being taken in order to address the issues are included in the report. This year there is information in relation to insulation, solar panels and reducing residents' energy bills, and information on investigating innovative district heating. There is also a feature on building new council homes.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.5 The report provides information on how the council as landlord is dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour. There is detail on the new ASB powers and how the information has been disseminated to residents on what these powers mean. This year's report also outlines what we are doing in respect of tenancy fraud.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.6 Social housing providers are expected to 'achieve the expectations of the regulator'. These are laid out in paragraph 3.2 of this report. The Annual Report aims to meet the HCA's requirements. The opportunities for more residents to become involved are featured in this year's report.

Public Health Implications:

- 6.7 There are strong links between improving housing and reducing health inequalities. The Annual Report details the council's investment in improvements to its housing stock to help reduce fuel bills. The report also provides detail on the loft conversions and extensions scheme which aims to increase the supply of larger family homes.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 6.8 The council's Corporate Plan 2015-19 lays out our aims in respect of housing and as a landlord. This includes; reducing inequalities, improving well-being, improving energy efficiency and providing good quality and well managed housing stock. Our progress and ambition to achieve these aims are reflected within the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Annual Report 2015

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

