



Cabinet



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Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Tenancy Strategy
Date:	23 July 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services.
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Tenancy Strategy 2024 – 2028 - Appendix 1 Community Impact Assessment - Appendix 2 Previous version of Tenancy Strategy - Appendix 3
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	All Wards
Purpose of the report:	To present to Cabinet the new draft Tenancy Strategy for approval.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Cabinet approves the Tenancy Strategy for 2024 - 2028.
Period for post policy/project review:	The next review of the Tenancy Strategy will take place in 2027/28.

1 Introduction/Background:

The Council's Tenancy Strategy needs to be reviewed to ensure it is compliant and aligns with other key housing policies. In addition, it needs to reflect the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

Local Authorities are required to have a Tenancy Strategy.

This report sets out the key areas for consideration and includes details of tenant engagement and recommends next steps.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

The Localism Act 2011 played a pivotal role in granting Councils the authority to shape the provision and management of social housing within their respective localities. This legislation introduced the requirement for all local authorities to have a Tenancy Strategy and introduced new tenancy options, such as fixed term renewable tenancies, in addition to permanent secure tenancies.

The responsibility to formulate a Tenancy Strategy is a responsibility for social housing providers, and the purpose of the strategy is to articulate local housing requirements and set out how social housing should be allocated in line with the Council's vision for its residents.

A Tenancy Strategy must guide and influence local Registered Providers so they can frame their own policies and procedures. In particular:

- What type of tenancies will be granted.
- Under what circumstances different tenancies will be used.
- Whether the local authority will offer secure or flexible tenancies.

In addition, the Tenancy Strategy may be used to:

- Help local authorities to assess the housing needs of their area and allocate resources effectively.
- Offer security of tenure to applicants, by offering lifetime tenancies.
- Present an overview of national and local housing considerations.
- Outline initiatives to support vulnerable groups, such as providing accessible housing for people with disabilities.
- Help local authorities to effectively manage and make best use of their stock.
- Meet legal requirements by ensuring compliance with housing legislation and regulatory frameworks.

Therefore, the development of a robust Tenancy Strategy is crucial to address these issues and to maximise the value derived from the Council's property assets, whilst recognising the importance of offering residents a secure place that they can call home.

The Tenancy Strategy is underpinned by the Council's Housing Allocations and Tenancy Management policies as well as the Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategies.

A draft 2024-28 strategy is appended to this report for consideration.

3 Options and alternatives considered

The Tenancy Strategy is a statutory document that is required to be produced by all Councils.

4 Consultation

Consultation has been completed with the following groups:

- Housing Senior Leadership Team - March 2024.
- Tenants and Leaseholder Committee - March 2024.
- Strategic Leadership Team - April 2024.
- Portfolio Holder Group - April 2024
- Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee - June 2024.

Feedback from these groups has been considered in finalising the strategy.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The strategy will be implemented within existing budgets.

As the Council will continue to offer secure rather than flexible tenancies, this will not impact any existing budgets. The Council will continue to work with Registered Providers to ensure that their rents are set at 80% or less of market rents, allowing the Council to fulfil the statutory duties of the Housing Act 1996 Part IV & IVV.

6 Legal Implications

The Strategy helps to explain the different forms of tenures and how these can change during the tenancy which should help current and future tenants understand the legal implications of holding a Council tenancy and minimise the chances of future complaint and/or legal challenge.

7 Risk implications:

The implementation of the proposed Tenancy Strategy may be associated with certain risks, including:

Legal Risks: Failure to comply with relevant tenancy laws and regulations could result in legal disputes, poor regulatory outcomes, and financial penalties.

Stakeholder Resistance: Resistance from stakeholders or tenants to changes introduced by the strategy could impede its successful implementation.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out for the tenancy strategy, and the analysis of the impact to the community has concluded that the strategy will have a positive and neutral impact to the community. No negative impacts are predicted.

The strategy outlines an approach of local and national housing considerations, giving an overview of the tenancies that will be offered and the support provided if required. These decisions are not based on the characteristics of each household but their housing situation.

The strategy does not discriminate against protected characteristic groups and falls in line with the Council's equality policy.

Human Rights –there are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

The strategy is designed to promote stability and security to tenants who are offered a tenancy via the Council. In partnership with the Housing Allocations Policy and the use of local lettings plans, the Council aims to help build and maintain sustainable communities, allowing tenants to feel safe in their homes and help reduce anti-social behaviour in high density areas.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

The strategy is designed to operate within current work structures, facilitating the allocation of homes and the ongoing monitoring of existing tenancies to take necessary actions. Additionally, ongoing partnerships with Registered Providers will be maintained.

There will be no change to officer roles to deliver this strategy. Specialist training will not be required, however, the ongoing training requirements for the Tenancy Management and Housing Needs teams will be kept under regular review.

11. Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer's comments are set out in section 6 (legal implications) and the strategy is recommended for approval.

S151 Officer

The financial impact is reflected in section 5 of the report. Implementation of this revised Tenancy Strategy is not expected to have a financial impact on existing approved budgets.

12 Conclusions:

The recommended strategy enclosed in this report focuses on using tenancies to promote secure and stable communities. The approach is to offer tenants lifetime tenancies, allowing the maximum security of tenure, rather than taking the approach of offering flexible short-term tenancies. The strategy gives an overview of national and local housing pressures, and further details about how the Council administers this strategy and tackles these challenges are included within this strategy, including the links to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, Tenancy Management Policy, and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

The strategy aligns with the Council's corporate priorities by ensuring access to quality housing for all eligible residents, strengthens communities, and helps reduce homelessness within the borough.