

Report for: Homes Policy Development Group

Date of Meeting:	19 th November 2024
Subject:	MID DEVON HOUSING (MDH) SERVICE STANDARDS UPDATE
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Simon Clist Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health
Exempt:	None which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A – MDH Service Standards 2024 -2029

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

Under the new statutory Transparency, Influence and Accountability consumer standard published by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), registered providers are required to communicate with tenants and provide information so that tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account. This includes making tenants aware of the services and standards of service they provide, and the different ways in which tenants can contact their landlord.

The previous service standards were adopted in 2016 and are due for review. This review has been further prioritised following recent publication of the new consumer standard and the requirement to ensure our published standards are consistent with this.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the PDG agree and note the updated MDH Service Standards 2024-2029 as attached in Annex A**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The current Service Standards were published in 2016 and since then a new regulatory regime has been introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing. This has included a revised set of Consumer Standards launched in April 2024 that all registered providers must adhere to.
- 1.2 Under the new Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard specific reference is made to providing tenants with our service standards and there is a need to ensure alignment with this standard going forward.

2 Review of the Service Standards

- 2.1 All our standards are already contained within our published policies and are readily available to tenants.
- 2.2 The Service Standards collate all the published service standards into a single comprehensive document. It provides a framework for staff which sets out the standard of service they are expected to deliver as well as informing tenants and leaseholders of the service they can expect to receive in a straightforward and more accessible way.

3 Proposed changes

- 3.1 The service standards have been revised to reflect the consumer standard requirements of the regulator. Whilst transparency consumer standard sets out requirements for providing clear information to our tenants, all the consumer standards are applicable and our service provision (and therefore the standards we follow) must meet the overall requirements across this consumer regulation framework. As such, the service standards document is divided into four areas to mirror the each consumer standard: Tenancy Standard, Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, Neighbourhood & Community Standard and Safety and Quality Standard.
- 3.2 The layout of the existing service standards has also been adapted to make the document more user friendly including new sections that do not feature in the existing standards document. Some service standards have remained unchanged whilst others have been re-worded to ensure the narrative of the updated document fully aligns with the expected outcomes of the most relevant consumer standard reference document as is also reflected in a number of recent adopted MDH policy updates.
- 3.3 The service standards have been further updated to provide clear information to staff, tenants and other stakeholders about what they can expect from MDH in terms of the services we provide. This also brings the overarching summary

of our service standards in line with new wording and clarity around responsibilities set out in recent MDH policy updates.

- 3.4 The revised document therefore provides a current, clear point of reference which can be used by tenants when involved in the scrutiny of performance.
- 3.5 It also provides clear guidance on the service that tenants can expect if they wish to report a complaint of service failure.
- 3.6 The service standards have previously been scheduled to be reviewed every two years. In future, these will be reviewed in conjunction with tenants to reflect any legislative requirements and/or other guidance or good practice. It is expected that these will be reviewed as minimum every five years in future to align, where possible, with related policy reviews and updates. For this reason it is proposed to publish the document as the 'MDH Service Standards 2024 - 2029'.

4 Consultation and adoption

- 4.1 Tenants were invited to comment on the draft Service Standards between 1st October and 31st October 2024
- 4.2 Members of the Homes PDG were invited to comment on the draft Service Standards between 1st and 31st October 2024
- 4.3 No comments or concerns were raised by tenants or members.
- 4.4 Despite a lack of response to consultation, it is important that tenants are fully aware of the updated Service Standards. To this end, should the standards be adopted, MDH will proactively signpost the Service Standards on our webpages/Facebook pages and in the next tenant newsletter. Where relevant, particularly in relation to queries, service requests or complaints we will also ensure specific tenants or other stakeholders are also aware of the updated standards as required.

5 Safeguarding and vulnerable tenants

- 5.1 MDH records details of all vulnerable tenants to enable us to support their needs. This includes making reasonable adjustments in dealing with vulnerable tenants so that they are comfortable when we interact with them and are not excluded from accessing our services.
- 5.2 The Service Standards make specific reference to the ways in which we will deal with vulnerable tenants and describes the way in which tenants will be treated.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 As a summary of existing standards, updated by separate policy reviews this document does not put forward new policy or performance standards and therefore does not require formal Cabinet or Full Council adoption. It is a public facing summary document that seeks to develop and improve the transparency

of our housing service delivery in line the new regulatory regime. Consequently, the recommendation is for the PDG to agree and note only.

6.2 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:

6.3 That the PDG agree and note the updated MDH Service Standards 2024-2029 as attached in Annex A.

Financial Implications

This report on its own does not give rise to any financial implication but implementation of the activities set out in the policy will have cost implications.

However, these will either be met from existing resources and funding or require separate business cases and appropriate approval to progress.

The Council's HRA revenue and capital budget and medium-term financial plan for 2023-28 supports the activities required to maintain the Council's housing stock and manage our tenancies.

Legal Implications

As a registered provider (RP) of social housing, the Council is obliged to take account of the standards contained within the revised regulatory framework which is administered by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). This states that RPs should communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants and leaseholders can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.

Risk Assessment

Failure to have Service Standards in place would put the Council in breach of the regulatory framework. Failure to have adequate arrangements in place for tenants and leaseholders to be made aware of the Standards they can expect from us could result in the Council failing to meet its statutory and contractual obligations.

Impact on Climate Change

This report leads to no impact on climate change

Equalities Impact Assessment

Mid Devon Housing collects data on the diversity of tenants and endeavours to tailor services to meet the needs of all tenants. Our housing estates must be accessible to those with disabilities and we have in place a regular schedule of inspections to ensure that all safety issues are identified and rectified as soon as possible. Information provided by MDH is available in alternative formats, upon request, in order to ensure that all those living on our estates understand the rights and responsibilities of the Council as a landlord, and tenants and other residents, individually.

This MDH Service Standard is not a new policy. It is a summary of standards published in a number of existing, adopted MDH policies which have been separately subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

We will work closely with our tenants to ensure they feel safe, secure and happy in their homes. This aligns with the overarching Homes priority within the Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 11.11.24

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 11.11.24

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 31 October 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 01 November 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

Current service standards:

[our-service-standards-august-2016.pdf \(middevon.gov.uk\)](#)