

SERVICE STANDARDS REVIEW

Cabinet Member Cllr Ray Stanley
Responsible Officer Claire Fry, Housing Services Manager

Reason for Report: To review the Services Standards

RECOMMENDATION(S): Cabinet approves the revised Service Standards.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Council must run the Housing Service efficiently and effectively in accordance with legislative requirements and the provisions of the regulatory framework.

Financial Implications: Realistic service standards must be set to avoid setting the Council to fail, which may have a detrimental effect on the service delivered.

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 Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Risk Assessment: It is good practice to review service standards on a regular basis to take account of changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, policy and good practice. Failure to develop a set of service standards could result in the Council failing to meet the expectations of tenants, stakeholders and the regulator which could have a detrimental effect upon the reputation of the Council.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The review of the service standards reflects changes in good practice and legislative changes. 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.
- 1.2 The HCA are currently responsible for the regulation of social housing. They have developed a number of standards which sets out what is expected of landlords. These standards were recently reviewed by the HCA in July 2016.
- 1.3 There is a specific expectation detailed within the tenant involvement and empowerment standard which states that RP's must ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence, and be involved in the making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards.
- 1.4 The Council is therefore expected to provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about the standards of housing services our tenants can expect and how the Housing Service is performing against those standards.

- 1.5 The Service Standards was approved at the meeting of the Decent and Affordable Homes Policy Development Group in June 2011. The Service Standards were due to be reviewed by 2014. Conflicting priorities have delayed this review.
- 1.5 Tenants Together approved the draft Service Standards at their meeting on 11 August 2016.
- 1.6 Cabinet is asked to consider the proposed changes and to agree the adoption of the reviewed standards.

2.0 Proposed changes

- 2.1 The service standards have been revised to reflect the requirements of the regulator. They have been divided into four areas: Tenancy Standard, Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard, Neighbourhood & Community Standard and home Standard.
- 2.2 The layout of the existing service standards has been adapted to make the standards user friendly. There are new sections that do not feature in the existing standards. Some standards have remained whilst others have been re-worded.
- 2.3 The service standards have been updated to provide clear information to staff, tenants and other stakeholders about what they can expect from the Housing service in terms of the services we provide.
- 2.4 The revised document provides a clear point of reference which can be used by tenants when involved in the scrutiny of performance.
- 2.5 It also provides clear guidance of the service that tenants can expect if they wish to report a complaint of service failure.
- 2.6 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 legislation requirements and/or other guidance or good practice. It is expected that these will be reviewed every four years.
- 2.7 Members are asked to agree to the revised service standards.

Contact for more Information: Claire Fry, Housing Services Manager (01884 234920 cfry@middevon.gov.uk)

Circulation of the Report: Councillor Ray Stanley, Management Team

List of Background Papers: A copy of such papers to be made available for public inspection and included on Website