

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

21 SEPTEMBER 2010

### REPORT OF HEAD OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### IMPROVING HOUSING SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORT AND HOUSING TASK GROUP

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek members' comments and approval on the Annual Report to tenants to meet the Tenant Services Authority requirements and approve the terms of reference of the Housing Landlord Services Task Group, both designed to improve housing services provided by Melton Borough Council.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **Members approve the Annual Report to tenants.**
- 2.2 **Members approve the terms of reference for the Housing Landlord Task Group.**

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 On 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009, members of the Community & Social Affairs Committee were presented with a consultation paper 'The Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 (Regulation of Local Authorities) Order 2009 - Consultation Paper
- 3.2 The Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 established a new regulator for social housing, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and the TSA became the regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in December 2008.
- 3.3 The TSA took over the role as regulator for Local Authorities on 1 April 2010.
- 3.4 In March 2010 the TSA produced the document 'The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2010'.
- 3.5 The TSA developed 6 standards that described the outcomes they want to see achieved and some specific outcomes they expect all providers to comply with. The 6 standards are summarised below: More detail is provided in Appendix A

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Containing requirements relating to the following areas</b>
1. Tenant involvement and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customer service, choice and complaints</li><li>• Involvement and empowerment</li><li>• Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants</li></ul>
2. Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality of accommodation</li><li>• Repairs and maintenance</li></ul>
3. Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allocations</li><li>• Rent*</li><li>• Tenure</li></ul>
4. Neighbourhood and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neighbourhood management</li><li>• Local area co-operation</li></ul>

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Containing requirements relating to the following areas</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>
5. Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value for money</li> </ul>
6. Governance and financial viability*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Financial viability</li> </ul>

\* This standard or part of standard does not apply to local authorities

3.6 A key requirement for Social landlords is to produce (jointly with tenants) an Annual report by 1 October 2010 outlining the performance and service standards delivered and promised against the TSA standards. The draft Annual report is shown in Appendix B for members' comments and approval.

3.7 In addition there is a further requirement to produce a 'local offer' that enhances the service standards by 1 April 2011. This will be developed with the Tenants Forum Executive Committee and members of the Housing Landlord Services Task group prior to being presented to members of this committee for approval.

### 3.8 Housing Landlord Services Task Group

At their meeting of 23 June 2010 members approved the establishment of the Housing Landlord Housing Services Task group. This amalgamated previous separate task groups working on specific elements of Housing services provided to tenants and prospective tenants.

3.9 The rationale behind this was based on emerging information suggesting service delivery improvement is best supported if both tenants and providers have a sense of ownership, the need for providers to develop their service offer in response to local priorities and to work with other partners in their neighbourhood to improve quality of life for all residents.

3.10 This clearly will be better served through a Task group with the responsibility with all related services rather than a silo based specific service area. It is clear from the standards that the approach previously taken may have led to potentially 5 different tasks groups, whereby now the Housing Landlord services task group is best placed to develop a more holistic tenant driven service.

3.11 The Task group at their last meeting agreed the following as their terms of reference and members are asked to approve this:

- To develop with tenants the service standards against the TSA guidelines to produce a draft Annual report for tenants
- To develop with tenants the 'local offer' that will enhance and improve services provided to tenants.

## 4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are clear links into the delivery of affordable and decent homes and other people related priorities against the 5 standards applicable to local authorities.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No direct financial implications have been identified in relation to the recommendations made in this report.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 Regardless of any uncertainty around the future of the TSA, the regulatory powers came primarily from legislation and all social housing providers are required to meet the statutory requirements within the regulatory framework. No direct legal implications have been identified in relation to the recommendations made in this report.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 No direct links have been identified, however the neighbourhood and community standard does require service standards around Anti-social behaviour

## 8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 No direct implications have been identified. The documents produced by central government were Equality Impact Assessed.

## 9.0 RISKS

### 9.1 Probability

Very High A					<b>Risk No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
					1	The service standards are not met.
High B					2	
					3	
Significant C					4	
					5	
Low D			1			
Very Low E						
Almost Impossible F						
	IV Negligible	III Marginal	II Critical	I Catastrophic		

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No climate change implications have been identified, although decent homes and the quality of homes are a feature within the standards.

## **11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 TFEC has been very active in the development of the service standards within the Annual report.

11.2 The Housing Landlord Services Task group were consulted in the development of the service standards within the Annual report.

## **12.0 WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected.

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Date: 8 September 2010

Appendices: Appendix A – The National Standards for Housing in England  
Appendix B – Draft Annual Report (to follow)

Background Papers: The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010.

Reference: X/Committees/CSA/2010-11/210910/Improving Housing Services.