
Meeting: Social Care Health and housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: October 2010
Subject: Tenant Service Authority – Annual Report
Report of: Cllr Mrs Rita Drinkwater, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Summary: The report and presentation provides Members with a briefing on the Housing Service’s Annual Report. The Report has been written using the guidelines from Tenants Services Authority (TSA) which became responsible for regulating local authority housing services as from 1st April 2010.

Advising Officers: Julie Ogle, Director for Social Care, Health and Housing
Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services

Contact Officer: Carol Rooker, Head of Housing Management

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

None identified as result of this report.

Financial:

None directly at present, the production of this report has been funded by the Tenant Participation budget.

Legal:

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 established the TSA as the new cross domain regulator for social housing. The TSA became responsible for local authority housing on 1st April 2010. It is now a requirement that all local authorities with housing stock must produce an annual report in consultation with their tenants.

Risk Management:

There is a reputational risk to the Council if we do not respond to the new regulations and requirements on all housing authorities. The TSA’s approach to regulation is risk based. They will take advice and instructions from the Audit Commission and will utilise performance information to assess whether they need to investigate the housing services further.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None identified as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None identified as a result of this report.

Community Safety:

None identified as a result of this report.

Sustainability:

n/a

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **That the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Annual Report.**
2. **That Members receive a further report in February 2011 outlining proposals for Local Offers.**

1. Background to the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Tenant Services Authority

Members will recall the presentation and report on the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) in April this year. Attached as appendix A is the report to provide background information.

Attached as Appendix B is the Annual Report

2. Requirements from the TSA

The TSA have stated that the report must do the following:

1. Be produced with full consultation of tenants
2. Include information on performance against five of the National Standards including:
 - a. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
 - b. Home
 - c. Tenancy
 - d. Value for Money
 - e. Neighbourhood and Community
3. Report on facts and figures for the financial year 2009-10
4. Provide benchmarking figures to show comparisons
5. Outline plans for 2010-2011 for each Standard
6. Demonstrate what work has been done and what will be done to gather information on producing Local Offers.

3. Tenant Consultation

This Annual Report has included consultation from the very early stage. A member of the Way Forward Panel volunteered to assist us with writing the document and to ensure tenants views and opinions are listened and taken in to consideration when producing the report. To add to this we carried out a survey and held a number of meetings across the Council area.

Since June we held a series of meetings across Central Bedfordshire at the following locations:

- Tenants Conference, Central Bedfordshire Council, The Council Offices, Dunstable.
- Tenants Conference, Leighton Linlade Town Council, The White House, Leighton Buzzard.
- Tenants Conference Customer Service Centre, Bedford Square, Houghton Regis.
- Sheltered Housing Open Day, Sheltered Housing Scheme, Furness Avenue, Dunstable.
- Sheltered Housing Open Day, Sheltered Housing Scheme, Manor Court, Caddington.
- Sheltered Housing Open Day, Sheltered Housing Scheme, Finch Crescent, Linlade.
- Kensworth Community Drop In, Kensworth Village Hall, Kensworth.
- Sheltered Tenants Action Group Meeting, Dunstable Community Fire Station
- Focus Panel Meetings, Dunstable Community Fire Station
- Way Forward Panel Meetings, The Council Offices, Dunstable.

We used the above meetings as an opportunity for our tenants to discuss any aspect of housing. At the same time we offered the opportunity to discuss Local Offers and asked what their local priorities were for the Housing Service. We also used these meetings to find out what tenants would like to see in an annual report.

We worked with tenant members of the Way Forward Panel at all the above meetings. They assisted us in gathering the information we needed, this was to ensure that what they told us would be addressed and they could see first hand what the issues are for our residents.

We also sent out more than 400 questionnaires to our Housing Sounding Board to gather more information on both Local Offers and the Annual Report.

We have made specific visits to Resident Associations and forums in the area to ask them directly what their priorities are for the service in relation to the Standards. To date we have collected some very useful information to go in to the report and for the Local Offers. We also put articles in our housing newsletter *Housing Matters* and in our Update Letters to invite tenants to take part. All the above consultations have proved to be very useful in shaping this report.

4. National Standards

As can be seen in the report all five of the required National Standards are included in the Report and detailed information on how tenants have been involved with each standard plus information of plans for 2010-2011 are included at the end of every section.

5. Report on facts and figures for the financial year 2009-10

Unless otherwise stated all the figures in the report are from 2009-2010. With the exception of Choice Based Lettings which was not launched until June 2009 the figures are for the financial year April 2009 to March 2010.

6. Provide benchmarking figures to show comparisons

For benchmarking we used Luton Borough Council figures. Although they have different demographics it was agreed by tenants that this should be who we compare with. The reasons were that they are a Local Authority that funded in a similar way to us and they are local to our area.

7. Local Offers

As well as National Standards, in recognition that local providers are best placed to meet local needs, the TSA has also introduced the concept of Local Offers or standards. These standards will allow social landlords to compare performance on a local level, and it will be for each provider to agree what the local standard should be, and how improvements can be delivered. These standards must be agreed with tenants. The requirement for this report was that we must show how we will be working to setting Local Offers. As we started the process in June we have detailed actions to date and set out future plans to agree the Local offers with local residents.

8 Conclusion and Next Steps

The report has been sent to the TSA on 1 October to meet their deadline. We will be sending out copies to all our tenants by 15 October. These will be delivered with the rent statements as a cost saving exercise.

We have also included a questionnaire asking tenants for feedback on the Annual report. This will assist us with producing the next Annual Report.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Tenant Services Authority Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee April 2010

Appendix B – The Annual Report

Appendix C – Presentation on the Annual Report

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Location of papers: Council Offices, Dunstable