

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....4th October 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

Tees Valley Tenancy Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Council's first Tenancy Strategy. A copy of the proposed Strategy was provided to members together with supporting appendices.

Members noted that the Localism Act 2011 required all local authorities in England to prepare a Tenancy strategy.

Tees Valley Local Authorities had recognised that Registered Providers operated across local authority boundaries and it was therefore sensible to produce a sub regional strategy, that each authority would adopt.

The aim of the Tees Valley authorities was to work practically with accommodation providers and make the best use of housing stock to address the housing pressures faced collectively .

The Tenancy Strategy was required to set out when and why fixed term tenancies could be used. Members noted that, at that time, 'lifetime' and 'introductory/starter' tenancies were widely used across the Tees Valley and it was the collective view of the 5 strategic housing authorities that these tenancies helped to provide stability within local communities. On this basis the Sub Regional Tenancy Strategy detailed that it was the expectation of all 5 Tees Valley LAs that fixed-term tenancies should be the exception rather than the norm.

The majority of housing providers who responded to the consultation exercises also indicated they did not have a strong preference for a radical introduction of fixed-term tenancies. That said, the Government had introduced fixed-term tenancies i.e. to allow more flexible arrangements for people entering social housing and to enable social landlords to manage their homes potentially more effectively. On this basis it was recognised that in some circumstances, a fixed-term tenancy may be appropriate and that some RPs would potentially use them as a lettings tool, for example:

- To address under and over-occupation;
- To increase social mobility;
- Make best use of stock that may be in short supply;
- For family intervention tenancies; and
- To support prospective adopters and foster carers.

Section 4 of the proposed Tenancy Strategy clearly documented the authorities' expectations in relation to fixed-term tenancies, the length of term and what was expected when a fixed-term came to an end. To ensure that appropriate and consistent housing advice/assistance was provided should a fixed-term tenancy be ended each housing provider had been consulted on a 'Protocol' which detailed expectations in terms of each RP's roles and responsibilities, each RP would be asked to sign-up to this protocol. A copy of the protocol was provided to members.

It was explained that, currently, a number of RPs. operating in the sub-region had taken the decision to operate fixed-term tenancies on a limited basis. Others were still considering their position.

Cabinet was informed that each of the 5 Tees Valley LAs would, over the coming weeks, seek member approval for the Sub Regional Tenancy Strategy. It was anticipated that the Strategy would become effective from November 2012 when all necessary approvals had been secured. A copy of the final document would then be shared with each social housing provider across the sub region and copies placed on the web pages of each LA.

To ensure that the Tenancy Strategy remained fit for purpose an annual review would be undertaken.

RESOLVED that

1. the introduction of the Tenancy Strategy, on a Tees Valley wide basis, be approved.
2. the draft Tees Valley Tenancy Strategy and its supporting Appendix be approved.
3. should the Tenancy Strategy require any minor revisions, before its formal implementation (as sign-off was required by each of the 5 Tees Valley LAs), delegated authority to agree any revisions be given to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 all English local authorities are required to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy (within one year of the Order coming into force on the 15th January 2012).

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest, under paragraph 11 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in the item entitled Tees Valley Tenancy Strategy, as he served on the Tristar Homes Limited Management Board.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 12 October 2012

Proper Officer  
08 September 2012