

Subject:	Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2014		
Date of Meeting:	10 September 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director of Environment Development and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafe	Tel: 29-3201
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council is required under the current regulatory framework for social housing landlords to publish a 'timely and relevant' annual report for our council tenants.
- 1.2 The annual report for the year ending 31 March 2014 has been produced with the involvement of tenants and leaseholders.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Committee approves the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2014 at Appendix 1 for publication and distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders in the autumn edition of *Homing In*.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The council has produced an annual report to council tenants and leaseholders since 2010. As with the other reports, this one has been produced following the guidelines set out under the regulatory framework of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- 3.2 The HCA's requirements are that the annual report should:
 - Contain timely and relevant information
 - Contain information on the repairs and maintenance budget
 - Provide support to tenants to build capacity to be more effectively involved.

- 3.3 This report follows a similar approach to last years and the key features of the report are:
- The report has been kept at eight pages to make it relatively accessible to residents.
 - There is a housing highlights page to show the big picture and to illustrate the service improvements we made during 2013/14.
 - It links the work of the five Service Improvement Groups to each section - demonstrating their key role in co-regulating housing management services.
 - Residents are featured in their own words through quotes about their housing service.
- 3.4 For residents wanting more information supplementary articles on our services will also be included on the council website.
- 3.5 If approved by Housing Committee, the annual report will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders with the autumn edition of *Homing In* magazine. It will also be publicly available on our website and made available in alternative formats where needed.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Council tenants and leaseholders have been involved in producing the annual report. This has included the Homing In Editorial Board, Service Improvement Groups, residents providing quotes for the report and at the Area Panels.
- 4.2 The Service Improvement Groups reflected that the draft report covered a range of actions across the service, that it should promote the importance of residents being able to take an active part in running their own estates and assisting in its improvement. Furthermore a well-designed report was considered essential to ensure it is accessible to residents.
- 4.3 The Homing In Editorial Board highlighted that it was well designed and that the report needed to have a balance of different forms of resident involvement. More information and updates for leaseholders would be welcomed and the promotion of the Brighton and Hove TR forum was also suggested.
- 4.4 At the Area Panels in July and August, there were positive comments about the look, design and length of the draft report with positive news stories. Residents asked that there was a further plain language check and that it is jargon free. Residents suggested that the Housing Customer Services contact details are promoted and that further detail on the amount of money raised by Seaside Homes is included. Suggestions were also received that where relevant numbers as well as percentages are included and that we promote the work of tenancy fraud.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The cost of producing the annual report is estimated to be £1,900. These costs will be met from existing print and design budgets within the HRA for 2014/15.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks *Date: 21.05.14*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Paragraph 3.2 sets out the regulator's requirements for the annual report to tenants and leaseholders. The draft annual report attached to this report satisfies those requirements. No individual's Human Rights Act rights are adversely affected by the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley *Date: 08.08.14*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The HCA lays out no specific requirement for equalities reporting in the annual report. However, guidance on this issue is contained in the *Regulatory Framework* which states that registered providers shall:

- treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

The annual report illustrates how the council meets that standard and its progress in continuously improving its performance in this area. It is hoped that based on the feedback from residents in 2012 the format of the annual report will continue to be accessible. Alternative formats of the report will also be available on request or where a need is known.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The annual report outlines how the council as landlord addresses sustainability issues and its progress in meeting its objectives. The commitments in the annual report include actions to reduce residents' energy bills, using energy grants to develop heat networks, insulation and solar panels and building new council homes. Tenants and leaseholders also have the option to opt into the e Homing In saving on postage and printing costs.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The annual report outlines how the council as landlord addresses anti-social behaviour and its progress in meeting its objectives and commitments to continue to work with residents to improve our services. It furthermore outlines forthcoming legislation in the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 which the service will be responding to.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The HCA says that providers are expected to 'achieve the expectations of the regulator'. These are laid out in paragraph 3.2 of this report. The annual report seeks to meet these requirements. The report informs residents about opportunities for a greater number of tenants to be involved in resident involvement – one of the key requirements of the HCA.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are strong links between improving housing and reducing health inequalities. The annual report details the council's investment in improvements to its housing stock to bring all tenants' homes up to Decent Homes Standard. It also reflects our progress and commitments to reducing inequality, such as continuing to extend financial inclusion, to help residents manage their finances and to increase our understanding of tenants' needs and tailor our services to meet them.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Publication of this honest and robust assessment of our performance to council tenants and leaseholders meets the council's commitment to resident involvement and transparency. The commitments to further improve our landlord services and housing stock support the council's priorities to involve residents in everything we do, tackle inequalities and create sustainable communities throughout the city. The annual report illustrates how the council as landlord works in partnership with residents and other agencies to improve the neighbourhoods that council tenants and leaseholders live in and provide opportunities for local residents through a new apprenticeship scheme.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2014 final draft

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. *The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012*, HCA
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/regulatory-framework>