

Subject:	Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2013		
Date of Meeting:	28 May 2013 – Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee 19 June 2013 - Housing Committee		
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 2013 has been produced with the involvement of tenants and leaseholders. This is in line with the plan and timetable agreed with the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee on 23 March 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Committee approves the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2013 at Appendix 1 for publication and distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders in the summer edition of *Homing In*.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The council first produced an annual report to council tenants and leaseholders in 2010 and then again in 2011. The 2012 report was produced under the new regulatory framework of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) which replaced the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). This report also follows the guidelines set out by the 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 For the 2012 annual report we consulted with residents through a focus group about what they would like to see in an annual report. Following this consultation it was decided that the key features of the report should be as follows:
- The report should be shorter to make it more accessible to residents
 - Text should be presented in a bullet point format as large amounts of text may be problematical for those who have difficulty reading.
 - Graphics should be used to compliment and emphasize the text.
 - Residents should feature in pictures and their own words, demonstrating their key role in co-regulating our housing management services.

We also encouraged residents to write articles for the report and involved the editorial board of *Homing In* by reviewing the report.

- 3.4 In March 2013 Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee noted the progress already made in implementing the council's improvement plans included in the 2012 annual report to council tenants and leaseholders. The committee also noted the proposed plan and timetable for producing a concise report of eight pages for 2013.
- 3.5 This year's report again involved the editorial board of *Homing In* to advise on content before publication. For residents wanting more information supplementary articles on our services will also be included on the council website.
- 3.6 If approved by Housing Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2013, the annual report will be sent to all tenants with the summer 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 been through the resident *Homing In* editorial board and through residents writing articles and providing quotes for the report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The budget for producing the annual report to tenants is included within the 2013/14 publicity budget for the Housing Revenue Account. Last year the shorter 8 page document cost £2,920 in print and design, a saving of approximately £3,000 on the year before.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 14/05/2013

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 set out the legal framework 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: 16/05/2013

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 and building new council homes.

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.

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.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2013 text version (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>
2. Annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2012 http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/housing/council_housing/4358_Housing_AR_2012_-_web.pdf