

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 JUNE 2021

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<b>Report Title</b>	<b>SERVICE STANDARDS ACTION PLAN</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide Housing Committee with an action plan (following April 2021's Housing Committee) to improve Tenant Participation and empowerment.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to agree that the action plan is relevant, fit for purpose and implemented.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation has taken place with the Neighbourhood Ambassadors, Community group Middle of the Hill (MoTH) and Housing Contracts including Property Care.			
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<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Service Standards Action Plan Appendix B - Tenant Led Service Standards			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	No	No	No

**1.0 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Following the Housing Committee on 8 April 2021 the committee resolved to:**

- a) Adopt the updated Tenancy Service Standards, and
- b) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Chair of Housing Committee to review the implementation of these service standards and provide an update and action plan to Committee in June 2021.

1.2 The Regulator of Social Housing requires Stroud District Council (SDC), as a social landlord to provide a detailed level of customer service standards that reflect the aspirations of SDC's tenants. This is in line with the Consumer standards and in particular the tenant involvement and empowerment standard.

1.3 Service Standards demonstrate that Tenant Services provide a clear and transparent service to SDC's tenants, leaseholders and residents. Those involved in the consultation of the standards presented to Housing Committee in April felt the standards were still good but wished to strengthen them by making a small number of additions.

1.4 The service standards action plan (APP A) provides further detail regarding how and why we will be delivering a number of activities including new avenues of engagement that benefits our tenants and leaseholders and the wider community.

## 2.0 THE ROLE OF STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL – A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITIES

2.1 Stroud District Council has a critical leadership role supporting and encouraging strong communities for the best possible quality of life, so that all can live well together. We are committed to developing a sustainable, proactive and respected relationship with our communities. This will be reflected in how services are organised and then delivered and in two-way communication which works to meet the needs of all our communities and individuals who need our support.

2.2 The District Council's Tenant Services team aims to provide well-managed and relevant support for all our residents, focusing on those who need us most. Quality conversations and easy community access is at the heart of what we do, enabling our communities to engage with us in an efficient and effective way to access services but also promoting two way conversations that lead to improvements and contribute to priority setting.

## 3.0 THE IMPACT AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER

3.1 The Social Housing White Paper (2021) includes the Charter for Social Housing Residents outlining seven key commitments that residents should expect from their landlords including:

- i. **To be safe in your home.** Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
- ii. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
- iii. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- iv. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- v. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Governance board (Housing Committee). The Government will provide help, if you want it to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
  - i. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
  - ii. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

3.2 These commitments will form the direction of travel of services we provide and underpin these with future Strategies and policies across the service. A number are updates of the current consumer standards from the Regulator that we are already compliant with.

## 4.0 ACTION PLAN

4.1 Our Commitment is to deliver the 14 actions contained within it, which are critically linked to full and effective engagement, actively listening to our residents and not imposing actions and activities upon them is the foundation upon which we will improve our services.

4.2 In line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, the White Paper and meeting the expectations of our tenants the attached action plan has been shared with our Neighbourhood Ambassadors and Community Groups.

## 5.0 INVOLVED TENANTS

- 5.1 This action plan has been reviewed by our involved tenants. Stroud has had a long and successful relationship with involved tenants and their input into how we design and deliver services has proven invaluable. This positive relationship reflects our approach to involvement and meets the requirement of the regulator and many of our tenants.
- 5.2 Tenant involvement is however an ongoing relationship, involving support, encouragement and cultural change. In line with SDC commitment to tenant involvement and the Social Housing White Paper, refreshed tenant's involvement mechanism, which are fully representative of the tenancy profile, will be established over the coming months. Their work will include supporting and monitoring standards.

## **6.0 RISK**

- 6.1 There is a concern over officers resourcing this action plan with available staff that has been outlined in several specific areas within the plan and as such Committee need to be aware of the pressures this places the service under when planning delivery. Joint working will partially support activity but there may be a requirement for additional budget to support elements of this plan.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is important that tenant led service standards and the implication for social housing providers from the Social Housing White paper will also be considered as part of a wider review of community access, including all residents of the district. Similarly, the Council's commitment to carbon reduction and energy efficiency (as reflected in its adoption of the Stroud District 2030 Strategy – Limiting, Adapting, Recovering and Responding in a Changing Climate) has implications across the district, including of course those who live in District Council managed properties. To this extent, service standards will regularly need to be reviewed and where necessary refreshed'.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Financial Implications**

Any actions would need to be delivered within existing resources. Any bids for additional funding will need to be put forward to Housing Committee and Council as part of the budget setting process and considered against other priorities.

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### **8.2 Legal Implications**

There are no significant legal implications.

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### **8.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

### **8.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.