

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & WASTE MANAGEMENT

COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

EXEMPT INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To provide details of the Councils Landlord Performance for 2014/15 as required under the Homes & Community Agency Landlord Regulatory Framework 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet approve:-

- Production of the Council's Landlord Annual Report to Tenants' (2014/15) complying with required governance under the Landlord Regulatory Framework, shown at **annex one**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Landlord Regulatory Framework continues to be scrutinised by the Homes & Communities Agency under legislation detailed in the Localism Act 2011. The HCA have recently published its third report into consumer regulation¹ and it remains the case that Local Authorities with their own housing stock are required to demonstrate compliance with the 4 consumer standards:-

1. Tenant involvement and Empowerment
2. Home
3. Tenancy
4. Neighbourhood and Community.

Key to demonstrating performance is communicating performance; and for Tamworth this is via the production of an Annual Tenants' Report. As in the past, the Tenant Consultative Group have influenced the production and contributed to the target setting and scrutiny in relation to core housing management performance. If approved, the production of the Annual Tenants Report will be the **5th** publication since the regulatory code was introduced. The co-regulatory framework developed by tenants is aimed at ensuring they influence, scrutinise and inform policy decisions and their views are routinely referenced in cabinet reports.

Annually the Landlord Service has celebrated improving performance and the majority of the benchmarked KPIs are either top quartile or in an improving position.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-regulation-review-2014-to-2015>

This year, following approval by Cabinet 6/11/14, satisfaction levels have been tested independently by MEL.² The last independent survey was carried out in 2011 when overall satisfaction with landlord services was just under 75%. It is pleasing to note that overall satisfaction has now increased to just over 78% with significant improvements in satisfaction with the neighbourhood; listening to tenant views and keeping tenants informed. Given the financial climate and challenging decisions around welfare reform it is pleasing to see that this has improved when often recipients are influenced by a range of public sector services not just the ones being tested.

Key Performance Indicators	2015	% dif.	2011
Overall satisfaction	78%	↑+3%	75%
Quality of home	79%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Neighbourhood	83%	↑+8%	75%
Rent provides VFM	73%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Repairs & Maintenance	68%	—	68%
Listens to views*	59%	↑+5%	54%
Keeping tenants informed*	80%	↑+12%	68%

Benchmarking across the sector and with 'best in class' is a core part of the Councils approach to performance management; ensuring we are able to measure key performance indicators, improvements and operational efficiencies. Tamworth's own stock retained housing service continues to report outcomes that are either top quartile or in an improving position. In fact qualitative data suggests overall satisfaction (when aggregated across all landlord services) is 88%. Full details of the KPIS are shown in the customer intelligence report at annex four.

In contrast, satisfaction levels with repairs have remained static. Qualitative data from Mears shows that invariably satisfaction with the actual repair is 92% whereas performance issues with making appointments and general customer contact is poorer, reducing overall satisfaction levels. Members know that an options appraisal is already underway to assess future arrangements as the current contract with Mears comes to an end. There is also a strategic focus and commitment from Mears to improve on this.

In November 2014, Cabinet also approved an external programme of in-service assessments to ensure continuous improvement. Progress is well underway as detailed below

Landlord Service	Assessment	Comment
Customer Involvement	TPAS undertook a health	Stage 1 of the

² Measurement Evaluation Learning September 2015

& Empowerment	check in 2014 around tenant scrutiny and the wider regulatory standard	accreditation is acknowledged and a detailed action plan for full accreditation is in place The Landlord Regulatory Team have been identified as best practice for the recent “inter-generational cook n eat programme”
Home Repairs	An independent assessment by ARK/Trowers is under way with a further report due back to Members early 2016	
Tenancy Tenancy Sustainment Sheltered Housing Housing Options	Rent Income Excellence Network assessed the rental service in 2014/15 and have recommended for early accreditation A full sheltered housing review has been undertaken and members are aware of the outcomes to continue service provision despite SCC funding ceasing Housemark voted Tamworth most improved landlord in relation to void turnaround times in 2012/13	RIEN have identified best practice in relation to welfare reform and continuing preparations. New Service offer is being consulted on as part of the service charge project A peer review is planned in conjunction with partners for 2015/16 to improve outcomes in terms of improved property standards as well as developing tenant housing options
Neighbourhood & Community Estate Management & Anti Social Behaviour	Tamworth were the first LA landlord to be accredited in 2012	Re-assessment by CIH is underway for 2015

There is a strong collaborative relationship between officers, member and partners and this provides a sound basis for improvement. The teams are not complacent and continually strive to improve services. Ultimately this is driven by a desire to improve customer services and the quality of life for citizens. However the consequences for non compliance are detailed in the HCA's consumer review, attached at annex three. A number of housing organisations were investigated and findings of 'serious detriment' found against them. Where this occurs there are interventions that have managerial and reputational consequences for the Councils concerned. The HCA have highlighted key messages from these investigations to avoid other registered providers / LA's finding themselves in this position:-

- Councillors have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the standards
- Councillors should ensure they have proper oversight of health and safety matters including gas servicing, fire safety and other repair issues
- The correct route of redress is through the organisations own complaints process and the regulator will not routinely by pass this
- Consumer standards continue to apply to Local authorities, whereas the economic standards do not.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The production of the annual report is done electronically and in hard copy for those who specifically request it. This is the second year that the annual report has been distributed in this way and therefore costs are met from existing resources.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

Failure to comply with the Homes & Community Agency Regulatory Framework could result in intervention should this be assessed as causing "serious detriment" to tenants. The co-regulatory framework developed with tenants to assess consumer standards as well as contribute to economic regulation mitigates this risk going forward.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The overall satisfaction with the council's landlord service has a direct correlation with 'the place' and work has been cross cutting with street scene, community safety, and the voluntary sector to ensure improved results in these areas.

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List of Background Papers

Appendices

Annex One - Annual Report to tenants 2014/15 (attached at the end of the report)

Annex Two - MEL – Independent STAR Survey - Report Published September 2015

Annex Three – Consumer Regulation Review 2014/15 (090915) HCA

Annex Four – Customer Intelligence Report 2014/2015