



Tamworth Borough Council

Tenancy Strategy

DRAFT

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Draft Tenancy Strategy

1. Introduction

Under the Localism Act 2011, all Local Authorities are now required to produce a Tenancy Strategy, setting out the high level objectives to be taken into consideration by Registered Housing Providers with Housing in the Borough as they make decisions about their own tenancy policies, this includes the Councils own Housing Management Service. Tenancy Strategies must explain the Local Authority's responses to the changes to affordable housing tenures introduced in the Act.

This Strategy is Tamworth Borough Councils response to that duty. It sets out how the Council would like Registered Providers with affordable housing stock in the Borough (including the Councils own Housing Management Service as the Council is a Stock Retaining Authority) to respond to the relevant changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011.

The changes that this Strategy covers are:

- The introduction of Affordable Rents for both new build and relets
- The use of Fixed Term Tenancies
- Changes to the way Councils can allocate properties
- Affordability

Registered Providers need only 'have regard to' this Tenancy Strategy in developing their own tenancy policies. In addition, Registered Providers have already signed their contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency over the development of the new Affordable Rent product for the delivery of affordable housing until 2015, which means they will already have plans in place. However, Tamworth Borough Council would like to see Registered Providers who operate within the Borough review their own tenancy policies, and continue to communicate with the Council to ensure that, wherever possible, their policies work to complement this Strategy.

This Strategy is an Appendix to Tamworth Borough Councils Healthier Housing Strategy and works to ensure that the changes in the Localism Act 2011 do not hinder the Councils progress in meeting the priorities set out within it, and that this Strategy should contribute to meeting these aims. It also considers the Council's Homelessness Strategy, although at the time of writing this is scheduled for review.

2. Why does the Council need a Tenancy Strategy?

The Coalition Government has identified a number of problems with social housing in its current format:

- It is a scarce resource and is not being used as effectively as it could

- Some low income households, unable to access social housing are living in more costly accommodation
- The housing benefit bill is high and rising
- There are high levels of unemployment in the Social Rented Sector and people get stuck there
- The Social Rented Sector is not as flexible in meeting needs and demands
- Social Housing has a poor reputation amongst the public
- New homes are needed but there has been a reduction in funding for new social housing supply

Therefore to address these issues the Governments response has been to allow the Social Housing Sector to resolve these issues at a local level by introducing through the Localism Act 2011 2011 reform to Social Housing which intends to:

- Enable decisions to be made about who lives where and for how long based on local need and circumstances
- Provide a housing system that is focused on protecting and supporting those who need it most
- Shift public perceptions of Social Housing

It is doing this by

- The introduction of Fixed Term Tenancies in social housing
- The production of Tenancy Strategies
- Allowing Local Authorities control of their waiting lists
- Enabling Local Authorities to discharge their homeless duty through the Private Rented Sector

3. The Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 has introduced new measures relating to the letting of affordable housing and to the way in which Local Authorities can use the Private Rented Sector to discharge their homelessness duty.

The Government has also introduced changes to the types of tenancy that providers of affordable housing are able to offer new tenants, and to rents in the affordable housing sector, with the introduction of Affordable Rents, which can be up to 80% of market rents.

By publishing this document this fulfils the Councils duty to have a Strategy that set out the matters that Registered Providers of affordable housing in the Borough must have regard to when they develop policies relating to:

- The kinds of tenancies they should grant
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind

- Where they grant tenancies for set terms, the length that those terms will be
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

4. What is Affordable Rent?

The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review introduced Affordable Rents as an alternative to social rent, to help fund new housing developments. All Registered Providers who have entered into development contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency will be able to charge Affordable Rents, which can be set at up to 80% of market rents on new homes for new tenants at the point of letting. Providers with these contracts in place are also able to introduce Affordable Rents on a proportion of their relets. All new homes that receive Homes and Communities Agency grant will be let in this way. In new affordable housing developments that do not receive Homes and Communities Agency grant, providers do not have to develop Affordable Rent homes and can continue to build traditional social housing. Significantly, tenants in properties let at Affordable Rents will be eligible for Housing Benefit, which is currently uncapped in the social housing sector.

Table 1 – Difference between current Social Rents and 80% Market Rents

House Type	Social Rent	80% Market Rents (lower Quartile)	Difference
1 Bed	£257	£316	+£59 (23%)
2 Bed	£289	£428	+£139 (48%)
3 Bed	£322	£480	+£158 (49%)
Average	£257	£316	+£59 (48%)

Source – Southern Staffordshire Districts Housing Needs Study and SHMA update 2012

Currently, tenants moving into Affordable Rent properties will be eligible for Housing Benefit, which means that any otherwise unaffordable gap between Social and Affordable Rents may be paid through this means. However, the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013 will put caps on the levels of benefit a household is entitled to and housing costs will be a part of this. This means that households may struggle to meet the costs of the new rent levels.

5. Conversions of existing stock to Affordable Rents

Registered Providers can choose also to convert existing properties for out right sale, low cost home ownership or to Affordable Rents when they become vacant and are re-let.

Registered Providers with homes in the Borough will have already signed their Framework Delivery Agreement for 2012-15 with the Homes and Communities Agency and will therefore already have agreed their total number of Conversions across all stock owned by the Registered Provider.

Tamworth Borough Councils aim is to maintain the current level of stock of Social Rented homes for those who Social Housing best meets their needs. If a large proportion of Registered Providers social rented re-lets in Tamworth were to be converted to Affordable Rent, over time this would make a significant difference to the stock of Social Rented homes. This may also have a potential impact on ability to move within the Borough and may also fail to meet intended Government outcomes of improving mobility within the housing sector.

The Council will expect Registered Providers to formally consult the Council on proposed conversions to ensure a sustainable mix of housing is maintained and that the conversions are equitable across the Borough. When considering the proportion of properties to convert in Tamworth, Registered Providers should have regard to the following:

- The pattern of re-lets by location, property size and type
- To ensure a reasonable supply of housing to meet the Council's identified need

6. Fixed Term Tenancies

The Localism Act 2011 enables Registered Providers to let affordable housing on fixed term assured tenancies to new tenants, as opposed to the assured ("lifetime") tenancies currently used by Registered Providers. The Act also allows Councils to alter from Secure Tenancies currently issued to Fixed Term Tenancies. The Government recommends that these should be fixed at a minimum of 5 years in all but exceptional cases, when two years (in addition to any probationary tenancy period) may be considered. The reason for this change in national policy is to encourage people living in affordable housing to move on when their circumstances improve to the extent that they can afford another tenure option, or to an alternative home that better meets their needs, so freeing up the affordable housing for a household in greater need of that type of housing. At the end of the fixed term, and depending on the circumstances of the individual household, tenants could have the following options:

- To remain in affordable housing, either in their existing home or in another affordable home (either at a Social Rent or Affordable Rent)
- To move into the private rented sector

- To move into home ownership, either via a low-cost home ownership route or otherwise.

When a provider decides not to reissue a tenancy at the end of the agreed term, the provider must give notice of this decision 6 months before the end of the tenancy and must provide advice and assistance for tenants to help them find suitable alternative accommodation.

7. Changes to the way the Council can manage its waiting list

The Localism Act 2011 allows Local Authorities to now determine via a locally specific allocations policy who can join its waiting list. This is different from the way the Council operates currently, where anybody can join the waiting list, regardless of their housing need. Under the new legislation, Councils are able to close the list to some categories of applicant. Central Government has retained a role in determining which groups should be given priority for Affordable Housing, however, by retaining the reasonable preference categories.

8. Discharge of duty into the Private Rented Sector

Prior to the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 Local Authorities could only discharge their Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector with the agreement of the household. However under the Localism Act 2011 Local Authorities are now able to discharge their Homelessness duty with an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector. This tenancy should be offered for a minimum of 12 months.

9. Locally how does this Strategy work?

The vision for Tamworth is “One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed”. This Strategy has been formulated in the wider context of this vision and the local priorities identified by the Tamworth Strategic Partnership to achieve this vision. Figure one identifies how this Tenancy Strategy will address the aims of the Tamworth strategic Partnership:

Fig 1 – How the Strategy meets the Tamworth Strategic Partnership aims

TSP Priority	How this Strategy will address these priorities
A safe environment in which local people can reach their full potential and live longer healthier lives	This Strategy will contribute to better use of housing resources allowing increased access to decent and affordable housing that will improve the health and wellbeing of tenants and improve the reputation of neighbourhoods.
A sustainable and thriving local economy, a more aspirational and competitive place to do business	By contributing to improved economic wellbeing of tenants that may facilitate moves to alternative housing

	options that meet changes in household circumstances and aspirations.
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This Tenancy Strategy also addresses the challenges identified in the Council's Healthier Housing Strategy which are identified in figure 2:

Fig 2 - How this strategy meets the aims of Tamworth Borough Councils Healthier Housing Strategy

Key Housing Challenges in Tamworth	How this Strategy addresses these issues
Households are unable to access suitable and affordable housing particularly those who are in poor or ill health	By enabling the effective use of the social housing stock in Tamworth to meet identified need
Poor conditions exist within some of the housing stock in Tamworth	Ongoing reviews of new Fixed Term Tenancies may provide additional opportunities to identify where poor housing conditions exist
Some households need a support to enable them to sustain a healthy home and lifestyle	Enhanced customer contact may result in reviews for support needs and referrals to appropriate agencies
In some areas the community and neighbourhood environment is having a negative impact on quality of life	Enable the best use of stock and contributes towards mixed, sustainable and healthier communities

The Council's Healthier Housing Strategy sets out a clear description of what the housing and health offer will be in Tamworth for the next 3 years. The Strategy is supported by a robust and comprehensive evidence base that has also been utilised in the development of this Tenancy Strategy.

http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/housing/housing_strategy/housing_strategy_and_enabling.aspx

This Tenancy Strategy must have regard to the Council's Homelessness Strategy. The Homelessness Strategy is currently under review and will directly reference this document. The challenges identified in the current Homelessness Strategy and how this Strategy addresses them are identified in figure 3:

Fig 3 – How this Strategy addresses the key Homelessness challenges in Tamworth

Key Homelessness Challenges in Tamworth	How this Strategy addresses these issues
Improve and Enhance Homelessness prevention activities	Supports the broader approach to housing advice and options by improving access to housing, addressing worklessness and

	improving health and wellbeing
Reduce the use of and time spent in Temporary Accommodation	Supports broad approach to using housing stock more effectively to enhance employment and training opportunities and encourage healthier lifestyles
Improve joint working to ensure effective partnerships are in place	Develop and enhance a constructive dialogue between the Council, RPs with housing in the Borough and key partners (i.e. health professionals)
Increase the supply of affordable housing and provide more settled homes	Encouraging a balanced and equitable approach that makes more effective use of a scarce resource, increases options for those most in need and is flexible to meet a range of needs and demands
Improve access to accommodation and services particularly for vulnerable people and those at risk of becoming homeless	Considers the specific needs of a range of household groups to ensure local housing is focused on protecting and supporting those in most need

10. Affordability of Housing in Tamworth

The Council has recently commissioned a Housing Needs Study and Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update. The purpose of this document is to set out the scale of housing need and level of affordable housing in Tamworth. The report provides the most up to date evidence on the affordability of housing in Tamworth at the time of writing this Strategy. The evidence contained within this document has contributed to the development of the Councils approach to Fixed Term Tenancies and when discussing conversion rates to Affordable Rents, the Council will consider the findings in this report. ***Link to NLP 2012 Housing Needs Survey to be inserted once finalised***

11. So how did the Council develop this Strategy?

To commence the process of producing the Tenancy Strategy two sessions were held with key partners. The first of these was held in November 2011 to facilitate a discussion around Tenancy Strategies and to make a decision whether a joint Strategy should be developed across the South Staffordshire area or whether each authority should develop their own Strategy. After the event following extensive discussion a decision was made for each authority to develop its own Strategy.

To begin the process of development of the Strategy in Tamworth and involve key partners from early on, a scenario planning session was held in February 2012. The session was facilitated by consultants who have been working with the Council to develop both the strategic approach to housing and the landlord service.

The development of the Strategy was fully explored at the session and issues relating to the following household groups were discussed:

- Singles and couples under 55
- Households on a low income but not on housing benefit
- Families with children of school age or below
- Households with a disabled member
- Older people over the age of 55

12. Formulating the Strategy

Key points arising from the sessions held have assisted the Council in formulating this Tenancy Strategy with the main conclusion from the partner session being that the Council would prefer to see in all instances, where a new tenancy is issued 5 year Fixed Term Tenancies for both the Council Housing and Registered Providers. The Council and partners consider that this length of tenancy allows a degree of stability to enable the customer to invest in their home, community and have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. However, the Council acknowledges that there could be exceptions to this as follows:

- Lifetime Tenancies: This applies to Sheltered Housing, Flexi Care Housing and designated older peoples housing.
- Longer tenancies (10 years) where the property is adapted to the needs of a disabled person and that persons needs are best met by them remaining in that property but may not be met longer term.
- 2 year tenancies where someone may require short term housing – for example when someone requires some temporary adaptations but may become better and will move on to a non adapted property
- Tenancy type maintained when someone has to move as a result of Domestic abuse

In all instances where a 5 year Fixed Term Tenancy is not used we expect Registered Providers to have valid reasons for doing so and give the Council an opportunity to comment

13. Tenancy Policies

Tamworth Borough Council's Tenancy policy is currently in draft format and is being developed in such a way as to have regard to this Tenancy Strategy and contribute to meeting the priorities and outcomes identified by the Tamworth Strategic Partnership, within the Healthier Housing Strategy and the emerging Homelessness Strategy.

Under the Localism Act Registered Providers were required to publish their Tenancy Policies by April 2012. The following are a summary of main points of the policies of the 3 largest Registered Providers who own and manage properties in Tamworth:

13.1 Midland Heart

All of Midland Heart existing tenants will remain on their current tenancy types. However new tenants will be offered one of the following tenancy types:

Table 2 – Tenancies to be offered by Midland Heart

Tenancy Type	Who this will be offered to
Licence Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers who do not have exclusive occupation of the property. This usually includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customers in emergency hostel accommodation ○ Customers using garages or parking spaces ○ Service Occupiers in Tied Accommodation who have service occupancy agreements
Assured Shorthold Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers living in a property where Midland Heart is the leaseholder • Customers living in intermediate rented properties • Customers living in rent to homebuy properties who have not purchased all or part of the property • Customers living in market rented properties • Customers in supported housing • Customers with limited leave to remain in the UK
Starter Tenancy (Assured Shorthold Tenancy - leading to Assured Non Shorthold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New customers who directly before becoming a Midland Heart tenant did not hold a social housing tenancy; and • (Only until the TSA National Standard on Tenure is amended to allow the use of fixed term tenancies as Midland Heart sees appropriate, expected to be April 2012) they are moving into a property that has not been designated an affordable rent property <p>When the TSA National Standard on Tenure is amended to allow the use of Fixed Term Tenancies as Midland Heart sees appropriate, expected to be April 2012, this form of tenancy will not be used except where customers are moving into a Midland Heart owned property where the need for</p>

Tenancy Type	Who this will be offered to
	that property is unlikely to change in the future -this will include sheltered and extra care accommodation
Fixed Term Starter Tenancy (Assured Shorthold Tenancy - leading to Fixed Term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New customers who directly before becoming a Midland Heart tenant did not hold a social housing tenancy; and • (Only until the TSA National Standard on Tenure is amended to allow the use of fixed term tenancies as Midland Heart sees appropriate, expected to be April 2012) they are moving into a property that has been allocated an affordable rent property; and <p>When the TSA National Standard on Tenure is amended to allow the use of Fixed Term Tenancies as Midland Heart sees appropriate, expected to be April 2012, this form of tenancy will used for all new customers who directly before becoming a Midland Heart tenant did not hold a social housing tenancy and one of the other forms of agreement are not relevant</p>
Mixed Use Business Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers in designated live/work accommodation
Assured Non Shorthold Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Midland Heart customers with an Assured Non-Shorthold Tenancy that are transferring to another Midland Heart owned property with 3 bedrooms or less. or • Customers who are moving into a Midland Heart owned property from and existing social housing tenancy and the need for that property is unlikely to change in the future. This will include sheltered and extra care accommodation
Leaseholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers who own a share in their property • Customers who own their home and Midland Heart owns the freehold of the land
Secure Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Midland Heart Secure Tenants who transfer to another Midland Heart owned property
5 year Fixed Term Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New customers who directly before becoming a Midland Heart tenant did hold a social housing tenancy • Customers who have successfully

Tenancy Type	Who this will be offered to
	<p>conducted a Fixed Term Starter Tenancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers who have successfully conducted a Fixed Term Tenancy and Midland Heart is happy to grant a further Fixed Term Tenancy • Any existing tenant choosing to transfer to a property with 3 bedrooms or more and their tenancy status is not protected in law

Source – Midland Heart Tenancy Policy v2

The policy also clearly sets out that in all instances unless there is a significant change in circumstances that the Fixed Term Tenancy will be renewed and where this is not the case a clear procedure is laid down for advice and assistance and how this will be offered to the tenant.

13.2 Waterloo Housing Group

Waterloo’s draft Tenancy Policy sets out their approach to the types of tenancies members of the Group will grant and where tenancies are granted for a fixed term and the length of the term.

Table 3 – Tenancy types to be offered by Waterloo Housing Group

<i>The types of tenancies granted</i>	
4.1	<p>The types of tenancies granted by members of the Group for general needs tenants are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic assured or secure lifetime tenancies as appropriate • Fixed term tenancies for at least five years, in addition to any prior probationary period (subject to 4.2. below). Such tenancies will be set for properties let at Affordable Rents, in accordance with the agreement entered into with the Homes and Communities Agency (see Waterloo Group Policy-Properties Let at Affordable Rents for more information)
4.2	<p>There may be exceptional circumstances where a tenancy for a period of no less than 2 years (rather than 5) may be granted, which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, and reflect the efficient use of this housing stock. These circumstances are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing provided specifically as student accommodation • Some supported housing that is aimed at providing support for a limited period of time (excluding CAT 1 and 2 accommodation as outlined in 4.3 below)

	<p>Those receiving long term support that is linked to their accommodation or have properties that have received major adaptations will receive longer fixed term tenancies based on an assessment of their future needs.</p>
4.3	<p>In the circumstances specified below existing vacant social homes will normally continue to be let as periodic assured or secure tenancies as appropriate at rents set in accordance with rent influencing regime guidance contained within the regulator’s Rent Standard Guidance (“social rents”), unless regulatory approval is sought on occasions for disposal of these homes (please also see Waterloo Housing Group Affordable Rent Decision Making Policy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties that are potentially difficult to let, including many flats (e.g. high rise blocks) • Properties that require substantial major work improvements • All properties classed as Category 1 and Category 2 accommodation will be retained as social rent. Other properties with support systems outside the CAT 1/CAT2 definition will be considered on an individual basis • When it is necessary to move a vulnerable tenant from a home that is currently charged a social rent (for example, due to domestic violence or on a police recommendation). The property that they transfer to will be charged at a social rent. • When a tenant in a property charged a social rent is being decanted (due to a redevelopment/regeneration scheme or a major works programme). Any property they transfer to will be let at a social rent. • Any other circumstance where the tenant of a property currently charged at a social rent is being asked to move by the Group. The property they move to will be charged at a social rent. • There may be circumstances where a particular property, or a group of properties, is excluded from conversion to Affordable Rent for a period of time. This decision may be due to the need for positively intervention to ensure social and economic sustainability in the community. Any such interventions will be agreed by the Director of Operations for the respective association.
4.3	<p>Where those who are existing social housing tenants choose to move to another social rented home members of the Group will offer a tenancy with no less security of tenure when they move. This does not apply however where an existing tenant chooses to move to accommodation let at an Affordable Rent.</p>
4.4	<p>Properties let at an affordable rent will (subject to 4.2 above) be let as fixed term tenancies for new tenants and will be set in accordance with regulatory requirements. They will in all cases be for a minimum of 5 years, and will be preceded in many cases by a 12 month probationary tenancy for new tenants (unless they have previously held a social tenancy with another registered provider). We will advise all new tenants who are offered an affordable tenancy of the fact that it is a fixed term tenancy and what this means for them in terms of tenancy conditions.</p>

Source: Waterloo Group Policy – Tenancy Management

13.3 Bromford Group

Bromfords policy clearly sets out the range of tenancies to be offered and how they will be used. Any existing tenant will have their tenancy protected and fixed term tenancies will only be used for new tenants. There is also the expectation that in all instances unless there is a significant change in circumstances that the Fixed Term Tenancy will be renewed and where it is not to be reviewed that advice and assistance will be offered to the tenant

Table 4 – Tenancy types to be offered by Bromford group

Tenancy Type	Will be offered to:
Secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Bromford customers transferring who are already on a Secure Tenancy
Assured Protected Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Bromford customers transferring who are already on an Assured Protected Tenancy
Assured Periodic Tenancy (this means a non-shorthold tenancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Bromford customer who already hold an Assured non short hold Tenancy Any New Customer who already holds an Assured non short hold Tenancy unless they are moving to home let at an affordable rent All customers who are in receipt of a state pension All customers who are living in a designated or purposed built supported housing scheme – unless the supported housing scheme is let on Assured Short hold Tenancies (see below)
Assured Shorthold Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minors (customers under 18) Customers living in a designated or purpose built supported housing scheme that fulfills the criteria in the point below; Customers living in schemes where we are contractually obliged to offer assured short hold tenancy agreements
Starter Tenancy (Periodic Assured Shorthold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Customers who do not already hold either a Fixed, Assured non short-hold or Secure tenancy with another HA or LA
Fixed Term Tenancy (Assured Shorthold Fixed Term) 2 or 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (2 or 5 years) Existing Customers who have satisfactorily completed their Starter Tenancy; or, (5 years) New customers who already hold an Assured Non short hold Tenancy and are moving to a home let at an affordable rent
License	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers in shared, temporary or hostel accommodation (mainly in Supported Housing) or where we are contractually obliged to offer license agreements.

Source; Bromford Group Tenancy Policy

Midland Heart, Waterloo and Bromford own and manage the most Registered Provider stock within Tamworth. Generally their approach to the use of Fixed Term Tenancies on both social and affordable rents and their renewal at the end of the term if the tenant's circumstances have remained unaltered all have regard to Tamworth Borough Councils strategic approach.

14. The Councils approach to Flexible Tenancies

Whilst the Registered Providers Tenancy Policies are generally in line with the Councils Strategic approach the Council does recognise that the Registered Provider needs only give regard to this Tenancy Strategy. Additionally the Council accepts that there will be a level of conversions to Affordable Rents in the Borough. Where possible the Council would like to enter into constructive

dialogue to allow comment on and influence over the Registered Providers Tenancy and Affordable Rent policies and subsequent reviews and how any decisions are reached.

Where Fixed Term Tenancies are used the Council would expect to see these re-issued at the end of the term unless there is a significant change of circumstances. The Council would again like the opportunity to work with Registered Providers to establish how this will be managed and the criteria used to allow its Housing Advice Service to prepare for the anticipated changes. This approach should also help mitigate any health risks associated with uncertainty of tenure.

The Council would not want to see Fixed Term Tenancies used as a management tool as there are already well established methods available in the Tenancy Management Toolkit to manage risk.

The Council would like to work closely with Registered Providers on the following which the Council views as critical in managing fixed term tenancies:

- How, when and by whom information and advice services to help people understand their housing options will be provided. This advice should include opportunities to move within and outside of the Social rented and Affordable Rent sector – i.e. into market rent homes or home ownership
- Clear criteria against which decisions over the reissuing of tenancies will be made
- A comprehensive appeals and complaints procedure
- A review process that the tenant understands and that is explained to the tenant at the time of signing a new tenancy
- Information sharing between Registered Providers and the Council where Fixed Term Tenancies are not to be reissued provided 6 months before the end of the Tenancy to prevent homelessness
- An expectation that Registered Providers will work with key stakeholders to ensure the needs of vulnerable people are met resulting in independent, sustainable and healthy lifestyles and positive outcomes for the tenants

15. Equalities and Diversity

The Council has a clear commitment to equality and diversity with everyone having fair and equal access to services.

The Council serves a diverse borough so getting services right for residents is important. When services are delivered they must not discriminate in a way that is unfair, illegal or unjustified.

The Councils Single Equality Scheme outlines how equality and diversity are promoted in the delivery of services provided both directly by the Council and in conjunction with partners.

All public authorities have a duty to set out their arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact that their policies could have on the promotion of race, disability and gender equality. To meet this duty Equality Impact Assessments are carried out.

The Council would like to see Registered Providers have regard to the Councils Single Equality Scheme and adhere to their own organisational Equalities and Diversity policies when developing, reviewing and applying their Tenancy Policies.

A full and comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy which can be found at the following link

Link to EIA

16. Governance – How will we monitor this Strategy?

Registered Providers should give regard to this Strategy and to ensure effective dialogue and continually ensure housing services meet the needs of Tamworth Residents. To ensure this and ongoing constructive dialogue between Registered Providers and the Council this Strategy will be monitored via the development of a Registered Provider Forum.

At these forums the Council would like the Registered Providers to give regular updates on the impact of conversions to affordable rents. The Council would also like to use these forums as a way to develop methods of working jointly to address issues such as under occupation.

In line with guidance issued the Council will review this strategy every 5 years unless changes to Government Policy dictate that a review should occur sooner. It will also be considered annually when refreshing the Action Plan for the Healthier Housing Strategy, at annual performance review meetings with Registered Providers and within the Council's yearly business planning process.

17. Summary

The Council has produced this Tenancy Strategy as an appendix to its Healthier Housing Strategy and it will sit alongside the Homelessness Strategy once this is reviewed and revised.

The Healthier Housing Strategy will be developed and amended over the next 3 years to take account of new Government legislation relating to Housing and Health, emerging best practice and other factors. This document too will be regularly reviewed in line with these alterations, and this will be incorporated into the Healthier Housing Action Plan when this is reviewed annually.

In line with the Healthier Housing Strategy this document was informed by evidence provided from a number of sources. For a full list of the documents that have informed this Strategy please see the Healthier Housing Strategy.

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