

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Customer Impact and Needs Assessment

Title of Policy/Service/Contract:

Adoption of a Tenancy Strategy for Mid Sussex District Council.

Division:

Housing, Environmental Health and Building Control

Lead Officer:

Neal Barton

Date Assessment completed: June 2012

1. SCOPING

1.1 What are the aims of the policy, service/service change or contract?

The Localism Act requires the Council to adopt a Tenancy Strategy to provide guidance to the providers of social housing in the District on the operation of the new affordable rent tenures. This means the replacement of the traditional social rent lifetime tenancies at about 50% of market rents with tenancies that can be fixed for 5 years and at an “affordable rent” at up to 80% of market rents. Registered providers can use the affordable rent tenures on new build properties and be converting a proportion of re-lets of properties that become vacant. The main aim of the Tenancy Strategy is to ensure that social housing continues to meet the full range of housing need in the District, particularly in the context of welfare changes.

The main actions and processes involved in adopting a Tenancy Strategy are to:

- establish a set of aims for the strategy
- provide the context for housing markets and needs in Mid Sussex
- set out guidance for the providers of social housing in Mid Sussex on the use of the new affordable rents and fixed term tenancies
- undertake consultation with Registered Providers on a draft Tenancy Strategy, prior to the adoption of the final version.

1.2 Who does the service/policy/contract affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?

The Tenancy Strategy is primarily aimed at providers of social housing in the District. It also affects existing social housing tenants, people on the Common Housing Register and other housing related partners.

1.3 If your service is likely to use contractors you need to consider whether equality is a core contractual requirement by asking the following questions:

The Tenancy Strategy does not involve contractual arrangements with Registered Providers. They are regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and are required to have equalities policies in place.

a) is the purpose of the contract to provide services directly to the public and is it considered relevant to equality?

NO

b) Is the provision of Goods, Works or Services in question likely to affect, directly or indirectly, your ability to meet the duty to promote equality?

NO

c) is the contract value £1 million or over?

NO

If the answers to the questions are “no” then equality will not be a core requirement of the contract and will have a low relevance to equality issues, and if the answers are “yes”, equality will be a core requirement of the contract and will have medium or high relevance to equality issue. See Appendix One of the MSDC Guidance Document “*Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement*” for further information on determining the relevance of equality and what measures you will need to consider to ensure contractors comply with the Council’s equality policies and schemes and relevant legislation.

1.4 will the contract have an impact on the community and Race Relations or other Equality issues?

N/A

1.5 where Equality issues are identified as core, how will the Council consider it at each stage of the procurement/contract process?

N/A

1.6 where Equality issues are identified as core, what arrangements will we require for monitoring Equality aspects of the Contract throughout its lifetime?

N/A

1.7 is it necessary to include a reference to Equality in the Tender Advert / OJEU Notice?

N/A

1.8 is it necessary to include a reference to Equality in the Specification?

N/A

1.9 is it necessary to include Equality issues in the Key Performance Indicators?

N/A

1.10 is it necessary to request a Method Statement to indicate how an equitable service will be provided?

N/A

1.11 if the Contract is for Goods, will the goods which are to be supplied meet the needs of a particular racial or other minority group?

N/A

2. Assessment of Impact and Needs - Supported with evidence from Data and Consultation
(See Guidance Notes for information on completing this section)

	Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Evidence base (e.g. from consultation, local or national data)	Current actions taken to address these	Further actions required
Race	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	None identified.	N/A	N/A	
Gender and gender reassignment	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability	The strategy can look to ensure that the best use is made of social housing with disabled adaptations for people that really need them. Also that supported and secure housing for vulnerable tenants should continue to be provided.	Housing Register and analysis of lettings. Tenancy Strategy refers to numbers on the Register with mobility needs.	Choice-Based Lettings seeks to match people needing disabled adaptations with the available ground floor and adapted properties. New wheelchair accessible affordable housing is provided	The strategy sets out guidance for when it might be appropriate not to renew a fixed term tenancy. This includes when a property has been substantially adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person who no longer lives there. The strategy sets out arrangements for monitoring the introduction of affordable rents, including implications for meeting the housing needs of disabled people.

	Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Evidence base (e.g. from consultation, local or national data)	Current actions taken to address these	Further actions required
Sexual Orientation	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Age	The strategy can seek to ensure that the social housing in Mid Sussex continues to meet the range of housing need in the District. This includes meeting the needs of homeless young people and providing appropriate housing advice as well as providing for older people.	<p>Analysis of those approaching the Council for housing advice and of people in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Analysis of Housing Register, new developments and lettings.</p>	<p>Young people in temporary accommodation are provided with the appropriate support.</p> <p>Choice-Based Lettings includes the advertising of sheltered accommodation and is generally at social rents. Extra care accommodation continues to be allocated by multi-agency panels.</p>	<p>The strategy sets out guidance designed to ensure that the housing needs of older people continues to be met, including the provision of sheltered and extra care accommodation.</p> <p>The strategy refers to arrangements for monitoring the introduction of affordable rents, including implications for meeting age related housing need in the District.</p>
Socio-economic factors e.g. Income or Skill Level, living in a deprived area	The Tenancy Strategy can set out measures to ensure the continued provision of affordable housing in the context of national changes to housing and welfare policies. The poorest are most likely to be adversely affected by the changes to	The Strategy includes modelling information on levels of rent in Mid Sussex against, incomes, social and affordable rents.	Consultation with Registered Providers on the Tenancy Strategy has included establishing their current arrangements for helping tenants get into employment and their future plans.	The strategy includes guidance seeking to ensure that providers are not setting their affordable rents at above LHA levels. It also seeks to mitigate the possible implications of reductions in Housing Benefit for working households under-occupying social housing. The strategy sets

	Local Housing Allowance, with larger households hit by the Universal Credit cap and potentially not being able to afford their rent.			<p>out expectations of advice and assistance to be provided at the end of a fixed term tenancy. Measures for monitoring the use of affordable rent tenancies and the reasons for their termination are included, which will include non-payment of rents.</p> <p>The Council will be working with providers and other agencies such as the West Sussex Credit Union to provide financial advice and support to help people into employment.</p>
Living in a rural area.	The ability to move under-occupiers on when their fixed term tenancy ends could impact on the sustainability of rural communities if there is no alternative accommodation in the village to move to.	Analysis of lettings and the Common Housing Register	<p>The Council's Allocation Scheme gives priority to those with a local connection, particularly the first lets of new affordable housing. The Council works with parish councils on housing needs surveys and rural exception sites.</p> <p>The Tenancy Strategy recommends that, subject to affordability, tenants should be able to under-occupy by one bedroom.</p>	<p>One of the aims of the Tenancy Strategy is to create balanced and sustainable communities. Monitoring of the Tenancy Strategy will seek to identify and issues with social housing in specific parishes.</p>

3. ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLANNING

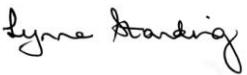
Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and/or barriers to services identified above need to be translated into SMART targets and recorded here. These actions then need to be incorporated into service plans so that they can be monitored at service level and also as part of a corporate equalities action plan.

Issue	Action/Target	Lead Officer	Deadline	How will impact be measured?
Guidance in the Tenancy Strategy and monitoring arrangements can help to mitigate the possible implications of the introduction of affordable rents on current and future social housing tenants.	Monitoring the introduction of affordable rents. This includes the numbers of these tenancies, who they are let to, reasons for their non-renewal and levels of rent arrears.	Neal Barton	From September 2012	Through monitoring information integral to the Strategy and discussions with Registered Providers on their Tenancy Policies.

4. Signing off this assessment and action plan

Signature ...Neal Barton.....
 Person undertaking the assessment

Date ...19 June 2012.....

Signature 
 Head of Service

Date19 June 2012.....