

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul Myers, Cabinet Member for Economic and Community Regeneration	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 20th January 2018	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3021
TITLE:	Revised Tenancy Strategy	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 - Proposed Tenancy Strategy 2017 - 2022		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 specifies that Local Housing Authorities must publish a Tenancy Strategy to which Registered Providers of social housing must have regard. The current strategy was approved in 2012. Following review minor modifications are proposed.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

2.1 Approve the adoption of the proposed Tenancy Strategy 2017 - 2022 contained in Appendix 1.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the efficient use of affordable housing will have positive wider economic benefits.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 specifies that local housing authorities must publish a tenancy strategy to which registered providers of social housing must have regard.
- 4.2 The core objective is to ensure that there is an adequate and suitable supply of affordable housing for households who are unable to compete on the open market. The equalities impacts of the proposed changes were considered during initial policy development and found there were no adverse impacts on protected groups.
- 4.3 The revised strategy will continue to contribute to corporate priorities:
- Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone – by improving the supply of affordable housing to vulnerable residents and lower income households who are least able to afford other housing options.
 - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live – by recognising the positive contribution that tenants can have in their communities
 - Building a stronger economy - by stimulating the development of new build affordable housing and making best use of existing stock.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council works in partnership with registered housing providers to deliver new affordable housing and manage the supply and allocation of social housing.
- 5.2 Registered housing providers with housing stock in the district must have regard to the Council's Tenancy Strategy which is effectively a code of guidance for them when developing their own tenancy policies.
- 5.3 The Localism Act 2011 allowed the Council, which is non stock holding, to increase the supply of affordable housing for those who need it most by encouraging registered housing providers to take up new flexibilities.
- 5.4 Housing need was reviewed in 2012 to develop the first Tenancy Strategy and a subsequent review was carried out in 2017. The 2017 review confirmed that there is still a very high demand for affordable housing in Bath and North East Somerset. It also provided supporting evidence for minor revisions being made to the strategic priorities in order to give additional emphasis to the needs of certain groups of people and objectives. The revisions to the strategic priorities are shown by the additional new text in bold below:

To increase genuinely affordable and appropriate housing options for local people **including options for people aged under 35, large families and older people.**

To sustainably provide new affordable housing at a time of limited public investment **by increasing the supply of lettings through new, flexible approaches to managing and allocating tenancies (and providing effective, appropriate and timely advice at the end of fixed term tenancies)**

To improve the response to local circumstances and priority housing needs **including preventing homelessness and supporting our statutory duties to the homeless and priority housing needs.**

To manage housing assets to make best use of and improve supply of affordable housing and by tackling and preventing tenancy fraud

5.5 In 2012 Affordable Rent Tenancies were welcomed as a way of facilitating the delivery of more homes but because of concerns about genuinely affordable options this section of the revised Tenancy Strategy has been amended accordingly.

The remaining key sections of the Tenancy Strategy which include guidance on the use of fixed term tenancies, the discharge of statutory housing duties, the disposal of social housing stock and prevention of tenancy fraud, have not been substantively revised or altered.

5.6 The aim is to publish the revised Tenancy Strategy and raise awareness of our strategic priorities with registered providers of social housing and private developers to increase the supply of affordable housing for local households who are least able to afford other housing options.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The Council is required to adopt and publish a Tenancy Strategy. The implementation of the Strategy will enable registered providers to work in partnership with the Council to improve the supply of affordable housing and better meet the housing needs of lower income and vulnerable households.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Tenancy Strategy was developed in 2012 in collaboration with registered providers. Following the 2017 review the revised housing needs evidence and proposed strategy were published as an open public consultation from 19 October 2017 to 24 November 2017. All registered providers with stock in Bath and North East Somerset were invited to comment on the proposals.

8.2 The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel were made aware of the open consultation and the Tenancy Strategy review.

8.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	Tenancy Strategy 2012 is available on the Council website
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	