

REPORT FOR DECISION

DECISION OF: CABINET
DATE: 22 August 2012
SUBJECT: Annual Report to Tenants 2011/12
REPORT FROM: Councillor G Campbell
Cabinet Member, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
CONTACT OFFICER: Marcus Connor
Head of Performance & Housing Strategy
Adult Care Services

TYPE OF DECISION: EXECUTIVE - KEY DECISION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS: For Publication.

SUMMARY:

This report seeks Cabinet approval for publication of the Annual Report to Tenants 2011/12. All social landlords are required to produce this report on an annual basis. In accordance with guidance previously issued by the Tenants' Services Authority (TSA) whose regulatory duties have now transferred to the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), the Council, as landlord, has again delegated the production of this document to the Arms Length Management Organisation (Six Town Housing).

The Annual Report to Tenants 2011/12 sets out in detail how housing management services have performed over the last financial year and proposals for service development in the coming year. It is framed around the national standards for social housing providers, originally set by the TSA in April 2010, and is intended to provide a challenging and honest view of service performance.

The report focuses on how tenants have and can become involved in the development of the services they receive. The report itself has been produced and designed in partnership with tenant representatives, to ensure that it contains information which is important to tenants and is presented in an 'easy to read' format.

The Council need to ensure that the report is distributed to all tenants by October 2012.

**OPTIONS &
RECOMMENDED OPTION**

Options

1. To approve the Annual Report to Tenants.
2. To approve the Annual Report to Tenants with amendments.
3. Refuse to approve the Annual Report to Tenants.

Option 1 is the preferred option, as this report has been produced through close liaison with tenant representatives. None publication of this report would place the Council, as landlord, in breach of its obligations to produce an Annual Report to Tenants.

IMPLICATIONS:

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:

Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework?
Yes

Statement by the S151 Officer

This report informs tenants and other stakeholders about Six Town Housing's performance during 2011/12.

Six Town Housing Ltd produces its own accounts which are independently audited.

The accounts are also consolidated within the Council's published "Group Accounts" as the Company is wholly owned by the Council.

There are no direct financial implications to the Council as the costs of producing this report have been identified by Six Town Housing.

Statement by Executive Director of Resources:

There are no wider resource issues.

Equality/Diversity implications:

As this document reports on activities in the previous year and any service developments for the coming year would be subject to separate Equality Assessments (EA), there is no requirement for an EA for the Annual Report.

The report itself will be sent to all tenants, with alternative formats (e.g. large-print, screen-reader compatible) being sent to all tenants who have previously requested these. These or translated versions will also be available on request.

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

Yes

As part of the regulatory framework for social housing

issued by the Homes and Communities Agency, registered providers must provide timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report, which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets and provision of support to tenants to become effectively involved.

Wards Affected: All Wards.
Scrutiny Interest: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR: Adult Care Services

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
	1.8.11		
Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	
	22.08.11		

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The national standards set by the Tenants' Services Authority (TSA) came into force on the 1 April 2010 and, although the regulatory functions of the TSA have now been transferred to the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), the duty for landlords to produce and publish an Annual Report to Tenants remains.

1.2 Under the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, providers are expected to meet six national standards:

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy*
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Value for Money
- Governance and Financial Viability*

*This standard or part of it does not apply to local authorities.

1.3 The aim of the standards is to improve the services for people who live in social rented and shared ownership homes in England. They are based on tenants' priorities in shaping local services. This approach is one of 'co-regulation', with the expectation of robust self governance by providers, incorporating transparency and effective tenant involvement.

1.4 The Annual Report to Tenants provides an important means of communication with tenants, setting out the services offered in respect of the national standards, so that tenants know what to expect from providers. Legal guidance

within the documentation states that all social housing providers must publish an annual report to identify any gaps in service provision and to demonstrate how they are meeting these standards. In addition, it must show how tenants have been involved in producing and scrutinising the report.

2.0 CONTENT OF THE REPORT

2.1 The content of the Annual Report to Tenants includes the following sections:

2.1.1 Introduction

A welcome from the Chief Executive and Chair of Six Town Housing, providing a commentary on the previous year and highlighting the year to come.

How Six Town Housing has responded to Local Offers, one year after these were introduced.

2.1.2 All About You

Provides details of how tenants have been involved in setting the direction for Six Town Housing services.

How tenants can be involved in improving services through new initiatives such as Online, through tenant and resident associations, Neighbourhood Matters, Customer Review Groups, Complaints Quality Assurance Group, the Editorial Forum and the Board.

Gives recognition of tenant achievements and commitments, such as through the Community Stars Awards.

Provides details of performance in the different areas of customer service.

Highlights how Six Town Housing ensure equality and diversity is central to everything they do.

2.1.3 Your Home

Gives an update on investment in the customers' homes; providing comparative information with similar organisations.

Highlights works done to improve the quality of sheltered and older persons' housing, in particular the development of the flagship Red Bank Extra Care scheme.

Demonstrates the support given to vulnerable tenants, including the work of the Home Improvement Agency.

Outlines how tenants are being supported to carry out minor repairs to their homes themselves.

2.1.4 Your Neighbourhood

Details environmental initiatives to make estates more attractive; how anti social behaviour is being tackled.

Provides an update of the different teams that exist to support these initiatives.

2.1.5 Your Money

Details how the money collected in rent is spent.

Highlights performance at rent collection and debt recovery.

- 2.2 It should be noted that this document will be sent to tenants with the latest copy of Six Town Housing's regular newsletter to tenants, 'Neighbourhood News from Six'. There are a number of occasions in the Annual Report when the reader is directed to particular (currently unspecified) pages in the newsletter. When the newsletter is finalised, the relevant details will be inserted into the Annual Report to Tenants

3.0 ISSUES

3.1 Risks

- 3.1.1 There are no perceived risks with producing this document.

- 3.1.2 The only risk is that the publication of the report is not approved, thus placing the Council, as landlord, in breach of its duties to produce this report on an annual basis.

3.2 Equality & Diversity

- 3.2.1 As the Annual Report to Tenants provides details of performance during the previous year, an EA is not felt to be relevant.

- 3.2.2 However, any service developments resulting from the proposals contained within the report will be subject to separate EAs.

- 3.2.3 The report will be made available to all tenants. Any tenants who have previously requested correspondence in alternative formats (e.g. large print, or screen reader compatible) will receive these. These or translated versions will also be available to all tenants on request.

3.3 Consultation

- 3.3.1 An Editorial Panel consisting of tenants, residents, Six Town Housing and Adult Care Services officers were involved in the development of the report. Panel members were involved throughout the process, overseeing the initial design concept, performance information and related articles through to production.

- 3.3.2 The draft report has also been reviewed and amended by the Housing Strategy Programme Board, Housing Operations Board, Adult Care Services Senior Management Team and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods & Regeneration.

3.3.3 The report has been through Six Town Housing's internal sign-off procedure.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 It is believed that the report provides a representative overview of services currently offered to tenants.
- 4.2 It meets any requirements in terms of tenant involvement in its development, style and readability; providing an honest opinion of where services are good and where improvements need to be made.
- 4.3 It, therefore, provides a good basis for tenant monitoring of and challenge to Six Town Housing in the coming year.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Cabinet are requested to comment on the attached Annual Report to Tenants 2011/12.
- 5.2 The Executive are requested to approve the Annual Report to Tenants 2011/12, subject to any changes recommended, and that copies are issued to all tenants.

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