

**DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY  
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 2nd October 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy seeking the Panel's endorsement of a Tenancy Strategy for Huntingdonshire.
- 1.2 The Head of Planning and Housing Strategy and the Housing Strategy Manager were in attendance at the meeting. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

## **2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS**

- 2.1 By way of background, the Housing Strategy Manager has reported upon the requirement of the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to have in place a Tenancy Strategy within twelve months of the Act coming into force. The most significant change in the Strategy is the introduction of a 5 year fixed term tenancy to be offered by social landlords to their tenants. All social housing within the District is managed by Registered Providers who are not required to offer this option to their tenants, but instead they will have regard to the Council's Tenancy Strategy when setting their own policies. Seven key principles have been established to guide the Strategy; namely in relation to the offer of fixed term tenancies, affordable rents and conversions and housing management.
- 2.2 The Panel has been informed that of the 9,000 social homes available within the District, 8,000 are managed by Luminus who will introduce fixed term tenancies for new tenants from April 2013 onwards. It has been confirmed that the new arrangements will not affect tenants on existing assured tenancies (even if they transfer to another property) or those in receipt of exemptions. Tenants' circumstances will be reviewed by social landlords prior to the end of their fixed term, with all housing options being reviewed, including those on offer within the private sector. It is intended that the proposals will encourage more effective utilisation of social housing whilst at the same time alleviate some of the pressures on the Housing Register.
- 2.3 In response to a question about the publicity undertaken on the proposals, it has been reported that targeted consultation with social tenants has not been undertaken by the Council. This is a matter for Registered Providers as it will be their own policies that affect tenants.
- 2.4 Referring to the impact of the welfare reforms, in particular those which relate to occupancy levels, it has been reported that work is being undertaken in conjunction with Registered Providers to communicate the changes to affected tenants.

## **3. RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 The Cabinet is invited to take into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Minutes and Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd October 2012.

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