

## **For publication**

### **Annual Report to Tenants 2015/16 (H000)**

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Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	13 December 2016
Cabinet portfolio:	Housing
Report by:	Housing Manager

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#### **1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To seek Member approval for the Annual Report to Tenants 2015/16 as required by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the social housing regulator.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Annual Report to Tenants is approved.
- 2.2 That a full copy of the Annual Report is published on the council's website and an article is published in the December edition of 'Our Homes' directing tenants to the website and giving them the option of being sent a hard copy.

#### **3.0 Report details**

- 3.1 Since 2010, housing providers have been required to produce an Annual Report to Tenants.
- 3.2 An Annual Report for each year ending 31 March, should be made available to tenants and should include details of performance against the HCA's standards, comparisons with the

previous year(s) performance, what has been achieved during the year and planned service improvements for the following year.

- 3.3 The Annual report for 2015/16 (attached at Appendix A) has in previous years, been produced as a high quality full colour document with photographs and been printed and posted to all tenants (approximately 9,400). However indications from the tenant communications service user group were that the report was not widely read. Indeed, very few comments about the document from tenants have ever been received.
- 3.4 Therefore the format and distribution for this year's report has changed. The document has been condensed to provide only key information likely to be of interest to tenants. It is proposed to only produce the report in black and white with no photographs additionally a copy will not be posted to all tenants. Instead, it will be published on the council's website with an article in the December edition of 'Our Homes' where tenants will be given the option of requesting a hard copy if they would like to receive one.

### **Summary of contents**

- 3.5 The report takes account of the key priorities and objectives in the Council Plan for 2015/16 including:

To make Chesterfield a thriving borough by:

- Making sure that local people benefit from growth in Chesterfield Borough
- Continuing delivering regeneration projects that will make Chesterfield Borough a better place

To improve the quality of life for local people by:

- Increasing the supply and quality of housing in Chesterfield Borough to meet current and future needs
- Increasing the quality of public space for which the council has responsibility through targeted improvement programmes
- Improving the health and well-being of people in Chesterfield Borough
- Reducing inequality and support the more vulnerable members of our communities

To provide value for money services by becoming financially self-sufficient

3.6 It includes details on performance, service delivery and future improvements in relation to:

- **Repairs and maintenance** – Whilst targets were met for responsive repairs and gas servicing, overall satisfaction with the repairs service was slightly below a challenging target. A major review of repairs and maintenance is being carried out in the current financial year in conjunction with tenants, which will consider this result.
- **Tenant involvement** – We continued to develop the ways that we involve tenants in influencing the services they receive, particularly through many tenant and community engagement events. Many such events involved tenants in projects designed to improve satisfaction with, and concern for their neighbourhoods and the environment. We also organised events to focus on dog fouling and recycling in key areas and to promote services, particularly those providing support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
- **Rent collection** – Whilst the overall collection rate for rent fell in 2015/16, work had already been identified in a separate report to improve this performance. Some important “quick win” improvements have been implemented and longer term improvements are being put in place which will improve this position.
- **Anti-social behaviour (ASB)** – The Star survey showed that since the previous survey in October 2013 we had improved on all indicators except for how easy it was to contact a member of staff to report anti-social behaviour. Whilst we now have six officers dealing with anti-social behaviour in contrast with nine officers at the time of the survey, we have put in place arrangements so that people making contact with us should always have at least one member of staff who can respond directly to callers during working hours.

- 3.7 **Estate services** - The Star survey showed a slight reduction in satisfaction with neighbourhoods as a place to live. The restructure of the neighbourhoods team to provide more neighbourhood rangers to inspect the estates and stronger line management. We also formed an estate services tenant group to identify precise areas for improvement and trained them to carry out monitoring of standards according to a nationally approved process.
- 3.8 **Allocating homes** – Unfortunately we fell short of the targets for the average number of days to re-let and to repair an empty home. These have particularly been affected by the number of 1 bed flats becoming and remaining empty as a result of welfare reforms and changes to the amount of housing benefit single people can receive. We are reviewing all aspects of these processes, including how we allocate and let our supply of 1 bedroom flats more quickly.
- 3.9 **Complaints handling** - Our performance in responding to complaints improved over the previous year, but did not meet the corporate target. This may have been a result of customer contacts being inaccurately logged. For instance, a customer reporting waste in a bin room logged as a complaint rather than a request for service. We are confident that improvements in administration of complaints will ensure that we achieve the target in future.
- 3.10 **Careline and support** – Our performance in answering calls to Careline and responding to call-outs continues to achieve our targets.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the production of the Annual Report. However, the revised format and distribution arrangement's will save approximately £10,000 and make available substantial officer time to concentrate on more direct forms of tenant involvement and to carry out further tenant consultation about how they want the report to be presented and delivered.

#### **5.0 Risk management**

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Failure to produce the report	Medium	Low	Project plan in place for the production of the report	Low	Low

## **6.0 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

6.1 In the production of its own guidelines and regulations the HCA have completed an Equality Impact Assessment on the whole regulatory framework, including the Annual Report to Tenants. We will produce individual equality impact assessments when reporting any changes in subsequent policy, practice and procedure.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 That the Annual Report to tenants is approved.

7.2 That a full copy of the Annual Report is published on the council's website and an article is published in the December edition of 'Our Homes' directing tenants to the website and giving them the option of being sent a hard copy.

## **8.0 Reasons for recommendations**

8.1 To comply with regulatory requirements

### **Decision information**

<b>Key decision number</b>	<i>697</i>
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Links to Council Plan priorities</b>	To make Chesterfield a thriving borough

	<p>To improve the quality of life for local people</p> <p>To provide value for money services</p>
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### **Document information**

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<b>Background documents</b>	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>None</i>	
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	Annual Report to Tenants 2015-16