

Health and Wellbeing Board 11th July 2012

Briefing note on the housing strategy consultation process

Background information

The Strategic Housing and Investment Service has produced a new draft housing strategy and consultation is now underway. The intention is to publish, by November 2012, a 30 year housing strategy (to align with the Council's 30 year housing revenue account business plan), with part 1 focusing on the next three years, i.e. 2012-15. The strategy is concise (20 pages) and sets out the Council's ten commitments (please see below) for housing in Rotherham. Alongside the housing strategy we will produce a robust action plan to deliver the key actions for the next three years, and a housing intelligence report which will contain detailed statistics and other contextual information.

We are taking the opportunity of the housing strategy consultation period to consult on other key documents. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of requirements including the publication of a strategic tenancy policy, which must set out the Council's position on fixed term Council tenancies. The Act also allows local authorities to apply restrictions to the housing register and other changes to the allocations process. The housing strategy is closely aligned with a number of other Council strategies, in particular the homelessness and Supporting People strategies, and as these are also being refreshed this year we are including them in the consultation.

The scope of the consultation being carried out between June and September is therefore:

- Housing strategy (main focus)
- Strategic tenancy policy
- Allocations policy
- Homelessness strategy
- Supporting People strategy

Consultation process

The draft housing strategy and an accompanying on-line questionnaire has been uploaded on the Council's website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/housingstrategy. The webpage also includes the tenancy and allocations questionnaire and details of how people can feed back their views (by attending public events, Area Assembly meetings, completing the questionnaire, emailing or phoning us with their views etc). This has been publicised widely to staff, Members, partners, tenants and members of the public via emails, a press release, attendance at meetings and forums etc. The main way in which we will obtain feedback from Rotherham's residents is via two public events.

The public events are at Springwell Gardens on 11th July and 16th August (flyer attached as appendix 2). People will be able to provide their feedback in a range of ways, including facilitated workshops to cover each of the housing strategy ten commitments:

- We will increase the supply of affordable rented housing in Rotherham
- We will ensure our Council housing meets the needs of the people of Rotherham
- We will help Rotherham residents to access decent private rented homes
- We will help people who wish to own their home

- We will continue to work with energy providers to help to ensure everyone can afford to heat their home
- We will support people in financial hardship and at risk of homelessness
- We will help vulnerable people to access the housing-related support they need
- We will help people in our most deprived communities
- We will strengthen our engagement with communities and individuals
- We will make communities safe

Strategic links between housing and health and wellbeing

There are clearly some important links between the housing strategy and health and wellbeing, particularly in the following areas:

- Decent quality housing
- Ensuring housing meets the needs of older people and people with disabilities
- Tackling fuel poverty
- Preventing homelessness
- Housing-related support services
- Focusing on deprived areas to reduce inequalities
- Making neighbourhoods safer

We will ensure the housing strategy contains appropriate actions to link with health, and will provide an update on the consultation to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September.

We are also planning a multi-agency consultation focus group in August to ensure the housing strategy action plan aligns with other key strategies, and will invite key representatives from health-related services.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 draft housing strategy
- Appendix 2 consultation event flyer

Contact names

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