

Report to Cabinet
13 February 2013
Report of Head of housing
Subject Housing blueprint and vision

Item

13

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval to the housing service blueprint and vision 2013 -2015.

Recommendation

To approve the housing service blueprint and vision 2013 -2015 which sets out our commitment to our tenants and leaseholders, meeting regulatory requirements through co-regulation, local offers and the Norwich standard.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority “Decent housing for all” and the service plan priority “Meet and exceed the social housing regulatory standard”.

Financial implications

The housing service has a statutory duty to consult with tenants and there is an established tenant involvement budget in the HRA to meet costs.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor MacDonald – Housing

Contact officers

Tracy John – Head of housing services 01603 212939

Anna Clarke – Tenancy services manager 01603 212083

Background documents

The revised regulatory framework for social housing in England 2012

Report

1. The housing services first blueprint and vision (appendix A) was developed as part of the housing improvement project in 2010 but now needs refreshing to fit the commitment to our tenants and work plan.
2. With effect from April 2012, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have taken on the regulatory powers for social housing. All social housing providers are subject to the regulatory framework for social housing in England.
3. It is expected of local authorities to be transparent and accountable in the services they provide in relation to housing services.
4. The housing blueprint and vision has been developed as a key document to underpin the Norwich City Council corporate priority 'Decent housing for all'.

Blueprint and Vision for the Housing service 2013-2015

The City council's overall vision is to make Norwich:

- A safe and clean city
- A prosperous city
- A city with decent housing for all
- A city of character and culture
- Provide value for money services

A city with decent housing proposes that housing landlord services work with residents and partners to deliver the following over the next three years:

- Improve the letting of council homes so we make the best use of existing affordable homes
- Improve the council's housing stock through a programme of upgrades and maintenance including new kitchens, windows and doors.
- Develop new affordable housing

Regulatory framework

The housing tenancy service is regulated by the Homes and communities agency. Registered providers must operate co-regulation principles with tenants.

There are four consumer standards which apply to the service we provide to tenants

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
 - Customer service, choice and complaints
 - Involvement and empowerment
 - Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenant
- Home
 - Quality of accommodation
 - Repairs and maintenance
- Tenancy
 - Allocations and mutual exchanges
 - Tenure
- Neighbourhood and community
 - Neighbourhood management
 - Local area co-operation
 - Anti-social behaviour

These standards form the framework in which Norwich City Council provides and manages services to its tenants.

Improving Services

Our 2009-2011 blueprint and vision was developed by talking to tenants, seeking their views on our services and how they can be improved within the resources available to the Council.

During 2011 along with all other Registered providers, Norwich City Council's Housing services consulted with tenants on the 'Local Offers' they wanted for the tenants of Norwich.

'Local Offers' form our promise (agreed in April 2011) to involve tenants in working along side us to develop and scrutinise our service within the corporate plan framework agreed by councillors.

Norwich 'Local Offers'

Getting involved

We will provide a variety of opportunities for you to get involved in shaping the service you receive by:

- Increasing the ways in which you can be involved.
- providing a variety of training and learning experiences.
- celebrating your achievements.

Listening and learning

We will improve the way we communicate with you by:

- having more opportunities for you to speak to staff face-to-face in your neighbourhood.
- ensuring that we communicate with you and provide feedback in a variety of methods which are clear and easy to understand.
- increasing opportunities for tenants and staff to work and train together.
- regularly updating you on how the housing service is performing.

Safer neighbourhoods

We will work with you to make your neighbourhood cleaner and safer by:

- involving you in ways to monitor and improve the neighbourhood you live in.
- providing up-to-date information on how to address important issues such as anti social behaviour.

Repairs and maintenance

We will offer you more chances to be involved in the delivery and monitoring of the repairs and maintenance service by:

- Involving tenant representatives when we re-let major contracts.
- providing organised opportunities for you to meet our contractors and ask questions.
- involving you in setting performance targets and the monitoring of how we are doing against them.

The results of achievements against the 'local offers' are reported in our annual report to tenants each October.

Tenants co-regulating with Norwich housing services

Tenant Involvement structure

During 2011/2012 residents, housing officers and Councillors worked together, initially with the assistance of an expert consult, to review the way we worked together, to ensure that we had a fit for purpose framework to meet future needs.

The new tenant involvement structure has been agreed by Norwich City Councils' Cabinet and will be implemented in April 2013 and reviewed in April 2014.

The new structure has three levels to create a flexible approach for tenants to be involved at a level that suits them, whilst having a formal structure to allow for full co-regulation.

Strategic level - Where the 'annual review group' comprising of Tenants, Councillors and Officers will review the work of the Tenant Panels.

CityWide level - Two 'tenant panels', one with responsibility for policy matters and a second for performance. They report to the annual review group and are able to create project groups to deal with specific issues.

Local level – This level includes all tenants as individuals and formal groups such as Tenants and residents associations, sheltered housing tenant forum, and tenant inspectors. Groups will operate specifically to their own remit with both they and individual tenants being asked by the tenant panels to carry out specific project work.

Tenants work with us setting, monitoring and ensuring our standards, service levels and performance targets are met. These include:

- Inspecting work carried out to repairs, improvements, caretaking service, sheltered communal areas, window cleaning, grass and shrub maintenance and refuse/recycling collection.
- Mystery shopping exercises across the range services.
- The Housing revenue budget – working to utilise the new financial freedoms to ensure all available income and resources are used efficiently and effectively for the benefit of current and future tenants, within the budget and policy framework set by the Council.

- Meeting on an annual basis to set targets and regularly to monitor these.
- Helping to procure a variety of contracts, both large and small.
- Awarding the Tenant Tick for publications to ensure they are easily understood, taking into account the diversity of our customers.
- Taking part in monitoring and reviewing services for our more specialist support services such as Sheltered housing, Norwich Community Alarm Service (NCAS) and the Families unit.

The Norwich Standard (replacing 'Decent Homes')

Meeting the Norwich Standard means that tenant's homes will have key elements such as kitchens, bathrooms and roofing improved to ensure no individual component goes beyond its life expectancy.

Resident involvement in the development and delivery of our investment plan and our 'Norwich Standard' is essential over the next five years.

We will meet our detailed 5 year plan in order to deliver the Norwich Standard by 2017.

We will be building new council houses and resident involvement will be essential in taking these building projects forward. Tenants will be involved from financial considerations and procurement through to design and finish. This is coupled with future plans specifically to refurbish our sheltered housing stock.

We have identified an additional £30m to be spent over the next 5 years (over and above the current medium term investment plan) to allow us to build new council homes and to refurbish and remodel our existing sheltered housing stock without impacting on our existing upgrade programmes (the Norwich Standard).

How we will measure and tell tenants about our performance

We will publish our performance and standards.

We will publish our quarterly scorecard showing tenant's choice of performance indicators they feel are most important.

We will publish an annual report to tenants.

Outcomes

We aspire to being the housing provider of choice for Norwich.

We will have increased tenant satisfaction in the area in which they live.

We will continue to improve performance across all our service areas.

Customer insight

Customer insight is about knowing who your customers are, what they think, what services they want now and what they want in the future.

Communities are made up of very different groups, with different needs, aspirations and levels of satisfaction and it is important that we consider these when designing services.

Knowing our customers

We collect information about individuals age, gender, ethnic origin and disability, through contact with our tenants, to build a picture of who our customers are. This can then be used to address access requirements to our services for certain groups and make specific adjustments to meet tenants needs.

Satisfaction

The housing tenancy service completed it's first STAR (survey of tenants and residents) in 2012 and bi-annually will continue to ask tenants their views on:

- Overall satisfaction with the housing service
- Quality of home
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood
- Value for money
- Satisfaction with service charges
- Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance
- Listens and acts

More detailed satisfaction surveys across the services we offer, starting in 2012, will provide further in depth analysis of views on our range of services. This satisfaction survey work will be used to learn and improve our services.

Complaints

We will respond to you, as tenants who make a complaint within 15 days and ensure that any lessons we learn from these are used to improve our services.

Supporting our tenants

- The sheltered housing service offers support to older tenants, with support needs, living in our sheltered accommodation. We will continue to work with these tenants regarding how the service is delivered to them.
- We work with our partners to identify and develop opportunities for housing with care schemes.
- Our Families Unit will continue to support families with complex needs
- Norwich Community Alarm Service (NCAS) will continue to support vulnerable and older people in providing its 24 hours alarm monitoring services to tenants in their own homes.

- NCAS works closely with Norfolk Community Services and the council sheltered housing in enabling tenants to maintain their independence and wellbeing in their own homes.
- We will work with tenants to explain and help you manage the effects of welfare reform where we can, helping to maintain tenancies.

Leaseholders

We will continue to work with leaseholders to ensure the environs of their homes are safe and clean and that they obtain value for money for their service charges.

Tenancy and housing strategy

We will produce tenancy and housing strategies which are fit for purpose and underpin our work as the majority social housing provider in the city and in accordance to our statutory requirements for a strategic vision for the city. We will use these strategies to help inform and support our economic strategy for the city.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

The IIA should assess **the impact of the recommendation** being made by the report

Detailed guidance to help with completing the assessment can be found [here](#). Delete this row after completion

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	13 February 2013
Head of service:	Tracy John
Report subject:	Blueprint and vision for the housing service
Date assessed:	January 2013
Description:	The Housing service blueprint and vision 2013-2015 sets out our commitment to our tenants and leaseholders, meeting regulatory requirements through co-regulation, local offers and the Norwich standard.

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensures continuous value for money through benchmarking and tenant scrutiny.
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving knowledge and understanding of customers and working with tenants to ensure relevant and appropriate services, performance and outcomes.
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving knowledge and understanding of customers and working with tenants to ensure relevant and appropriate services, performance and outcomes.

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving knowledge and understanding of customers and working with tenants to ensure relevant and appropriate services, performance and outcomes.
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving knowledge and understanding of customers and working with tenants to ensure relevant and appropriate services, performance and outcomes.
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving knowledge and understanding of customers and working with tenants to ensure relevant and appropriate services, performance and outcomes.
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendations from impact assessment				
Positive				
The blueprint aims to improve services and accountability through increasing engagement and scrutiny by tenants.				
Negative				
Neutral				
Issues				