



## Report to the Board

15 May 2014

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**Title:** Gateshead Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Policy

**Report of:** Director of Customers and Communities

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### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform Board of approval by Gateshead Council's Cabinet's of an update to the Strategic Tenancy Policy which is a statutory requirement for all local authorities in England and Wales pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 and an update to Gateshead Council's Tenancy Policy, which is a regulatory requirement for all social landlords.

### **Background**

2. The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) has given social housing providers a number of discretionary powers in letting their housing stock which include introducing fixed term tenancies.
3. The Act also places a specific statutory duty on all local authorities to produce a Strategic Tenancy Policy which sets out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by other registered housing providers when formulating policies to implement a range of new flexibilities for the letting of social housing.
4. The Council's Sustainable Communities (Place) Advisory Group considered these options on 30 January and 12 March 2012. Their advice was that there should be no substantial changes to the way the Council lets its properties and that the Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy should highlight the Council's wish that registered housing providers should continue to let their homes on the most secure long term tenancy.
5. Cabinet approved the Strategic Tenancy Policy on 18 December 2012 but agreed that it should be reviewed annually. Following consultation with partners, an initial review has been completed and an update agreed which includes updated information on housing market conditions in both the public and private sector. No other changes have been made and it is significant that there is still reluctance amongst housing associations working in Gateshead to used fixed term tenancies.

6. Cabinet originally approved the Council's Tenancy Policy on 19 June 2012. This is a Homes and Communities Agency regulatory requirement for all housing providers. Cabinet agreed that this also should be reviewed annually. Following consultation with housing partners however, no significant changes have been made. It is intended that the Council continue to let properties on the most secure and long term form of tenancy.
7. Cabinet, at its meeting on 29 April 2014, approved the update to the Strategic Tenancy Policy in relation to registered housing providers letting of social housing in Gateshead.
8. Cabinet also approved the update to the Council's Tenancy Policy and that no significant changes are made in the way the Council lets its residential properties.
9. A copy of the report to Cabinet is attached at the Appendix to this report.

### **Link to Values**

10. This report relates to the following company values: -
  - Being honest, accountable and transparent
  - Being a listening and learning organisation

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

11. A Comprehensive Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Strategic Tenancy Policy and Gateshead Council's Tenancy Policy. The presumption that social housing should be let the longest, most secure tenancy reduces the risk of unintentional inequalities.

### **Financial Implications**

12. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

### **Risk Management Implications**

13. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

### **Value for Money Implications**

14. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

### **Health Implications**

15. The Comprehensive Impact Assessment highlights the need to let properties on the longest, most secure tenancies to maintain the health of some of the poorest and most vulnerable families in the borough and help them maintain contact with GPs and health professionals.

### **Impact on Customers**

16. The updated Strategic Tenancy Policy and Gateshead Council's Tenancy Policy will have a positive impact on customers.

17. Letting of properties on the longest, most secure form of tenancy helps to maintain sustainability in neighbourhoods.

#### **Consultation Carried Out**

18. The Council's Sustainable Communities (Place) Advisory Group were consulted on both the potential advantages and disadvantages of the new flexibilities within the Act.
19. Registered housing providers and other local authorities in Tyne and Wear have been consulted on the policy.

#### **Recommendation**

20. The Board is asked to note Cabinet's approval of the update to the Strategic Tenancy Policy and Gateshead Council's Tenancy Policy.