

# Item 5

## REPORT TO CABINET

13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

### HOUSING PORTFOLIO

#### The Respect Standard for Housing Management

##### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2007 Cabinet considered a report on the new powers available to the Council as a landlord to tackle anti social behaviour from its tenants. The report recommended the adoption of these powers and identified the need to address, a new policy initiative from the Government called the Respect Standard for Housing Management.
- 1.2 The Respect Standard for Housing Management, (The Standard) which was launched in August 2006 as part of the Government's Respect Agenda. The Standard sets out the key components a social landlord should have in place to deliver an effective response to Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). To date, over 100 Social Landlords have signed-up to the Standard, owning approximately 32% of all social housing stock in England.
- 1.3 Sign-up is voluntary, however, the components of the Standard have been built into the Audit Commissions Key Line of Enquiry 6 (Tenancy and Estate Management), and will be applied to inspections of social landlords from February 2007.

##### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council signs-up to the Respect Standard showing that it is committed to doing all that is reasonably possible to provide excellent services to tackle anti social behaviour and create a culture of respect through its housing management role.
- 2.2 That the Housing Department's Statement of Policy and Procedure on Anti Social Behaviour are updated to reflect the changes set out in this report.
- 2.3 That the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) developed from the self assessment carried out against the Standard is set out in Appendix 1 is implemented.

### **3. The Respect Standard – Core Commitments**

3.1 The Standard was launched in August 2006, it was introduced by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to promote and foster best practice by social landlords dealing with ASB. Signing-up to the Standard is voluntary and will not involve inspection, however its core elements have been built into the Audit Commission **Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) 6 Tenancy & Estate Management**. This will be applied from February 2007 to all inspections of social landlords carried out by the Audit Commission. If the Council is to achieve its stated ambition to deliver a high quality housing service meeting the requirements of the Standard is a key element of achieving this.

3.2 The Standard is built around six core commitments, which are further sub-divided into a number of key actions. The six commitments are:

- Accountability and Leadership
- Empowering and reassuring residents
- Prevention and early intervention
- Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses
- Protecting communities through swift enforcement
- Support to tackle the causes of anti social behaviour

Full details of the Respect Agenda can be accessed on the DCLG's website at: [www.communities.gov.uk/standardsignup](http://www.communities.gov.uk/standardsignup)

### **4. Self Assessment and Implementation of the Respect Standard**

4.1 Landlords signing-up to the Standard are expected to undertake a self-assessment against the Core commitments, and produce a Service Improvement Plan for addressing any areas for service improvement. The DCLG have stated they intend to publish a Performance Management Toolkit during 2007 to assist signatory landlords in fully meeting the Standard.

4.2 Pending the publication of the Government's Respect Standard Performance Monitoring Toolkit. Self-assessment has been undertaken against KLOE 6 and using the Housing Quality Network's self assessment questionnaire. The self assessment involved Officers from the Council, Tenants, Police and other key stakeholders. The assessment identified that the Council's approach as a landlord in tackling ASB met many of the key actions set out in the Standard.

The six core commitments of the standard are subdivided into 61 questions. The self assessment showed that the service fully met 35 of the requirements of the questions and that key areas for improvement identified included:-

- Extending the use of measuring and responding to Customer Satisfaction Surveys to support service improvement;
- Consider the use of introducing Good Neighbour Agreements where required;
- Using effective reporting of ASB (number and type of case and outcomes) to resident and community groups through a variety of media;
- Consider the use of early intervention services to tackle ASB such as Mediation;
- Improving customer access to contact staff and report ASB outside of normal office hours;
- Ensure effective measures are in place to establish that witnesses and victims feel safe, that they are well protected and supported throughout the court process;
- Include information of ASB policies and procedures in induction training for all housing staff;
- Develop clear procedures on domestic violence to support the work carried out by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

- 4.3 A Service Improvement Plan developed as a result of the Standard is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It is recommended that the Council sign-up to the Standard given that it meets the majority of the requirements of
- 4.4 the Standard and has developed a SIP to ensure full compliance to the Standard.

## **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 No additional implications have been identified as a result of this report.

## **6. Consultations**

- 6.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Tenants Housing Services Group and Housing Federation who supports the Council being a signatory to the Respect Standard.

## 7. Other Material Considerations

### Links to Corporate Ambitions/Values

7.1 The Community Strategy for Sedgefield Borough has adopted 4 key outcomes for the Borough one of which is *“a Borough with strong communities where people can access the housing and services they want in attractive and safe neighbourhoods.”* The Borough Councils ambitions mirror the Community Strategy’s outcomes and the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan and becoming a signatory of the Respect Standard can contribute to the delivery of this ambition.

### 7.2 Risk Management

Failure to sign up to the Standard and delivery the SIP may result in the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to work with partners to tackle ASB and fail to meet the requirements of the Key Line of Enquiry 6, as and when the Council is inspected by the Governments Audit Commission.

### 7.3 Health & Safety

No additional issues have been identified

### 7.4 Equality & Diversity

Full account will be taken of the Council’s obligation to promote equality and diversity in the implementation of this Standard.

### 7.5 Legal and Constitutional

No additional issues have been identified

### 7.6 Sustainability

No additional issues have been identified

### 7.7 Information Technology

No additional issues have been identified

### 7.8 Crime and Disorder

By signing-up to the Standard the Council consolidates to its statutory duty to work with partners to reduce crime and disorder in the Borough as outlined in Section 17 of The Crime And Disorder Act 1998.

- 7.9 Human Rights  
No additional issues have been identified
- 7.10 Social Inclusion  
No additional issues have been identified
- 7.11 Procurement  
No additional issues have been identified

**8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

None

**9. List of Appendices**

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**Wards:** All

**Key Decision Validation:**

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007  
 Respect Standard for Housing Management DCLG August 2006  
 Respect Standard for Housing Management: A guide for Landlords August 2006.  
 The Respect Handbook

**Examination by Statutory Officers**

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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