

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 OCTOBER 2025

HOUSING SERVICES TENANCY POLICY 2025-2030

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to consider the draft Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030, before approval by Cabinet on 2 December 2025.

Summary

2. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 at **Appendix 1** sets out the type of tenancies we offer for our Council housing and aims to:
 - (a) Help those in housing need access a home that meets their needs
 - (b) Help to build sustainable and healthy communities
 - (c) Help to make decisions about who lives where, in what type of tenancy and for how long.
3. The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards state that Registered Providers of social housing must "offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock".
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy, and they have given their full support, apart from the issue of tenancies for new build properties, which is set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members:-
 - (a) Consider the report and draft Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

(i) The RSH Consumer Standards

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan's HOMES priority to provide affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents
Addressing inequalities	An equality impact assessment screening form has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified
Tackling Climate Change	The Council is actively improving the energy efficiency of our Council homes, through our Housing Services Climate Change policy, ensuring we offer tenancies for warm and energy efficient properties
Efficient and effective use of resources	This policy will ensure we make the most efficient use of our housing stock
Health and Wellbeing	Providing the right accommodation to meet the needs of individual households will support the health and well-being of our tenants
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	All Council tenants
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	This report does not represent an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no issues which this report needs to address

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 sets out the type of tenancies we offer for our Council housing and aims to:
 - (a) Help those in housing need access a home that meets their needs
 - (b) Help to build sustainable and healthy communities
 - (c) Help to make decisions about who lives where, in what type of tenancy and for how long.
7. The type of tenancies that we offer for our Council housing are as follows:
 - (a) **Introductory tenancies** for those who are not already a secure tenant for the first 12 months of the tenancy.

- (b) **Secure tenancies** for most tenants who have completed an introductory tenancy.
 - (c) **Flexible tenancies (or fixed term tenancies)** in some circumstances, such as adapted properties, properties within a regeneration area, rent to buy properties and rural properties, once an introductory tenancy has been completed. Flexible tenancies allow the Council to review a tenancy (usually every 5 years) to ensure the property continues to meet the housing needs of the household.
8. The Tenancy Policy also covers other areas, such as mutual exchanges, succession rights, transfers and tenancy assignments.
9. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 proposes a number of changes to the existing tenancy policy, as follows:
- (a) **Adapted Properties.** Under the existing Tenancy Policy, properties with adaptations costing £7,500 or more are allocated as flexible tenancies. These are properties with adaptations that cannot be easily reversed, such as through floor lifts and extensions. Under the Tenancy Policy 2025-2030, this amount has been amended to £6,500.
 - (b) **Rent to Buy Properties.** Rent to Buy properties, which have been built with Homes England grant, will be allocated by offering a flexible tenancy, with an expectation that the tenant will purchase the property at the end of the 5-year period. This requirement to purchase is also a term of the tenancy.
 - (c) **New Build Properties.** Under the existing tenancy policy, new build properties are not separately identified as being allocated a flexible tenancy, and this is the same under the Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 (so no change in policy). However, Local Lettings Policies, introduced for our recent new build schemes have stated that these properties are allocated as a flexible tenancy (unless the new tenant is a pre-2012 tenant with a secure tenancy). Therefore, tenancies for any future new build properties, will be offered as secure tenancies. Existing tenants of new build properties will be offered a secure tenancy when their flexible tenancy expires.
 - (d) **Rightsizing.** A new Rightsizing offer is for tenants living in larger homes to move to smaller homes and free up these larger homes for families. For tenants that are interested, we can offer a wide range of support and a choice of housing that better suits their needs. Rightsizing is an option available and is not mandatory.

Outcome of Consultation

10. Our Tenants Panel were consulted about the new policy and the proposed changes in July 2025. Overall, the Panel have given their full support. However, on the question of flexible tenancies for new builds, all barring one Panel member (85%) have stated their support for flexible tenancies for new build properties. Comments included the following:
- (a) "I still believe that flexible tenancies should apply to those in new build homes."
 - (b) "I strongly believe that flexible tenancies should be included to new build properties and that this shouldn't be changed."

- (c) “I don’t think this should change, I think flexible tenancies work, I moved into a new build 5 years ago, as did my neighbours, and I know that their circumstances have changed. I believe Lancaster (Close) is a good working example of flexible tenancies.”
- (d) “I can see the logic but 'flexible' means to me that the Council would not force anyone to move after a fixed term period and should treat each case by looking into the tenant’s circumstances.”

Equalities considerations

11. An equality impact assessment screening form at **Appendix 2** has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified.