

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Community, Health & Housing Committee**

**Estates Management Strategy 2018**

**Report of:** *Angela Abbott, Interim Head of Housing*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the background and recommendation to adopt a formal written *Estates Management Strategy* ('the Strategy'). The Strategy will allow for a more focussed and transparent approach to service provision.
- 1.2 The Council does not currently have a written and published Strategy and the 2018 internal audit highlighted this as an area for improvement to move towards substantial assurance.
- 1.3 The introduction and implementation of the Strategy will allow for strategic and policy review to ensure efficiency, economy and excellence of service provision as a social landlord.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

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| <p><b>2.1 That the Committee formally approve Option 1 (to implement the draft 'Estates Management Strategy 2018' (Annex A)).</b></p> |
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**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 There is no statutory requirement for a stock-holding Local Authority to produce an Estates Management Strategy.
- 3.2 Audit recommendations have identified that the introduction of a written published Strategy will allow for a greater customer focus and will provide an over-arching mechanism through which to update relevant estate policies.
- 3.3 Following Audit recommendations, the management response was to undertake and submit a written Strategy to Committee by March 2018.

#### **4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 The Strategy has been deliberately drafted to work in synthesis with Housing Services' Housing Strategy (2017 – 2020) which recognises the need for community-based solutions which utilise resources efficiently and effectively to address housing needs.

##### **Option 1: Implementation of the Strategy:**

Implementing the strategy will allow for:

- Transparency, particularly for customers
- Tailored-service provision
- Economic focus
- Audit compliance
- Future policy provision

##### **Option 2: Non-implementation of the Strategy:**

Non-implementation will potentially:

- Fail to advance Corporate priorities
- Fail audit requirements
- Create lack of focus on service provision

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation:**

- 5.1 Option 1 is recommended as the most transparent option for the Council and supports the '*Getting our House in Order*' transformation programme for Housing Services. It also ensures compliancy with audit report recommendations.
- 5.2 Taking no further action will fail to advance corporate priorities and would be counter to our modernisation approach.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation with 'Tenant Talkback' was conducted on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018. 'Tenant Talkback' approved the introduction of the Strategy and welcomed future policy documents, to produce clarity relating to service provision.

#### **7. References to Corporate Plan**

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan aims to:

- To deliver safe and comfortable homes which are efficient and sustainable.
- Manage our stock to recognise the limited resources available and supporting those in greatest need.

- Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.

7.2 Through implementing cost-efficient service charging and by adopting a separate Service Charge Policy each of the aims listed above can be achieved.

## 8. Implications

### Financial Implications

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8.1 No direct financial implications are arising from this report. The Estate Management Strategy, is currently under pinned by the Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19, where resources will have to be maintained through existing budgets and reserves. Any pressures that may arise from the strategy, will be reviewed through future Budget setting processes.

### Legal Implications

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8.2 The adoption of the Strategy will allow the Council to develop appropriate policies in relation to corporate property.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.

**Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None.

## 8.1 Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Draft Estates Management Strategy 2018

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