

# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2021

8

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY 2021-24 (TENANT SERVICES)</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval for the strategy, which sets out the priorities to be delivered in order to ensure the continued financial viability of Tenant Services, as well as a fair and robust approach to managing income.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to approve the strategy.</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Consultation with: Kevin Topping, Head of Housing Services Patricia Andrade, Tenancy Operations Manager Briefing with Chair and Vice-Chair of Housing Committee			
<b>Report Author</b>	Sara Weaver, Income & Systems Manager Email: <a href="mailto:sara.weaver@stroud.gov.uk">sara.weaver@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	N/A			
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Tenant Services Income Management Strategy 2021-24 Appendix B – <a href="#">Corporate Delivery Plan 2018-22 &amp; 2019-20</a>			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a responsible social landlord, it is important that we have a fair and proportionate approach to managing our income to ensure we can continue to deliver a great housing service, which is both efficient and modern and offers the best value for money, whilst performing our functions effectively and economically, to ensure the continued financial viability of Tenant Services.

### 2. MAIN POINTS

The strategy:

- 2.1 Demonstrates our commitment to developing a culture where we work with our customers to tackle barriers that stop them from managing their money and paying their rent on time, so we can provide the housing services they need.
- 2.2 Outlines our priorities showing how this will be achieved by supporting our customers to pay their rent and asking for our help when they need it.

- 2.3 Recognises how our ability to collect rent and other income impacts on the services that we can provide, so it is essential we have a proportionate approach to taking action when money is owed such as continuing to invest in administering recharges, to tackle tenancy breaches, so individuals are accountable.
- 2.4 Shows that we understand how working with others helps us to maximise services and enlisting the help of different sectors allows us to focus on our responsibilities as a registered social housing provider.
- 2.5 The delivery and success of this strategy will also be affected by external factors so we recognise continued successful partnership working will play an integral role in the success of our priorities.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 There is increasing pressure from the Regulator of Social Housing to deliver value for money. Therefore, it is more important than ever that we can show we have considered not only our own, but also our customers' needs; as well as demonstrating a continued approach towards helping those who need financial support and/or are in rent arrears, delivering and achieving better outcomes to help customers sustain their tenancies.
- 3.2 The strategy supports several of the key priorities of the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan including Affordable Housing in which we focus on and "continue to deliver high quality services for council tenants" as well as Health & Wellbeing by "reduce(ing) poverty and inequality and help(ing) vulnerable people cope with welfare reform."
- 3.3 In March 2020, we had to move all our operations to homeworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our business continuity arrangements, supported by the investment in our IT infrastructure and an agile team culture, meant we were able to do this quickly and efficiently, with a minimum of fuss and/or loss of service or risks arising to customer safety. Several months on, this is still the case; and the team continues to manage their work with minimal operational disruption.
- 3.4 The implementation of a new Housing Management System will have the potential for a positive impact on income collection due to the improved visibility of rent account information 24/7 for our customers; access to technology to support a proactive approach to rent management for our officers; improved task and communication management to facilitate a more consistent and personalised service; and improved access to reports and management information.

### **4. IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

Income collection is important to the overall financial position of the Housing Revenue Account. Rents and charges fund the services provided by the HRA, including major works on properties and sustainable energy works.

Any policies included within this report will be delivered within existing provision and the ongoing impact of income collection will be monitored.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

Email: [lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **4.2 Legal Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category

One Legal

Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **4.3 Equality Implications**

Customers' protected characteristics, particularly disability, will continue to be considered at all times, so their specific needs can be met as required.

#### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.