
LEASEHOLD MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members agreement to adopt a Leasehold Management policy.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Housing Management section does not currently have a written policy including service standards to deal with leaseholders.
- 2.2 There are currently 116 flats bought under the Right To Buy where the Council maintains a duty to the leaseholders.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Good practice from the Chartered Institute of Housing recommends that Housing Management Sections have a policy for dealing with its leaseholders.
- 3.2 Although they have bought their flats under a long lease the Council still has duties to them, in maintaining the block, consulting before improvements, and numerous obligations under the terms of the lease.
- 3.3 Attached as an Appendix is a draft new Leasehold Management Policy. When this is adopted, new leaseholders' leaflets explaining their rights and responsibilities in simple English will be produced, as our current leaflets are not comprehensive.
- 3.4 The policy provides a detailed framework for dealing with leaseholders. There is increased importance given to the duty of involvement and this responsibility will be carried out by the new Tenant Participation Officer who has already developed a leaseholders' and tenants' newsletter and is arranging joint meetings with leaseholders and tenants across the District.
- 3.5 Following adoption, the new policy will be publicised through 'Your Home' and copies will be distributed to leaseholders in an attempt to engage with them to try to create a residents' association for leaseholders.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In order to prevent criticism that the Council is failing to engage with leaseholders a formal policy is required. This coupled with the efforts of

the new Tenant Participation Officer should lead to the formation of a new residents' association.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Leasehold Management Policy meets the primary objectives of Rochford District Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are minimal resource implications involving the production of a policy, advertising the Council's commitment to it in 'Your Home' and staff training and awareness.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This policy only strengthens the Council's position by stating its aims and objectives and does not alter its legal responsibilities and obligations.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That a Leasehold Management Policy be adopted. (HRHM)

S. J. Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

Background Papers:

Chartered Institute of Housing Good Practice Briefing – Resident Involvement in Housing Services.

Chartered Institute of Housing Recommended Standards

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APPENDIX



**Rochford District
Council**

**LEASEHOLD MANAGEMENT
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

LEASEHOLD MANAGEMENT POLICY

Rochford District Council recognises that the effective management of leasehold properties is crucial in order to provide efficient service to its leaseholders and to respond to the performance management requirements of Best Value and inspection.

Aims and Objectives

1. To act at all times as a reasonable and responsible landlord
2. To protect and respect the rights of the Council's leaseholders
3. To maintain the building in a good condition in order to protect the Council's and the leaseholders investment
4. To provide leaseholders with opportunities for participation and involvement similar to those offered to tenants.
5. To actively involve leaseholders in the management of their homes through communication, consultation and involvement.

Service Standards

1. To provide simple, easy to understand service charge accounts
2. To maintain an on-going dialogue with leaseholders about the content and level of services, how service charge accounts are presented and major repairs/improvements.
3. To monitor services to ensure they are delivered properly
4. To provide early notification about potential major works
5. In recovering service charge arrears to follow the same principles and policies for rent management including providing advice on welfare benefits and debt.
6. To ensure that leaseholders are actively engaged in the management of their homes via:
 - Communication – through newsletters, annual reports, information leaflets, support for residents newsletters
 - Consultation – about improvements to homes and neighbourhoods, changes to services
 - Involvement – by developing residents associations, grants for residents groups, administrative assistance.
7. To ensure that consultation in relation to major repairs and improvements is carried out in accordance with legal duties and is co-ordinated so as to avoid delays and/or additional costs arising in the tendering and contracting process.