

AGENDA



CABINET

MONDAY, 7 JANUARY 2013

11.00 AM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETERS HILL,
GRANTHAM**

Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

MEMBERS: Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal (Leader/Portfolio: Policy, Strategy and Strategic Partnerships), Councillor Paul Carpenter (Deputy Leader & Portfolio: Governance & Communication), Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright (Portfolio: Grow the Economy and Economic Development), Councillor John Smith (Portfolio: Green, Healthy and Arts), Councillor Mike Taylor (Portfolio: Strategic Resources - Well Run Council) and Councillor Teri Bryant (Portfolio: Good Housing)

Committee Support Officer: Lucy Bonshor 01476 40 61 20
e-mail: l.bonshor@southkesteven.gov.uk

Members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting of the Cabinet at which key decisions will be taken on the issues listed on the following pages. Key decisions are marked *.

4. *TENANCY STRATEGY

Report H&N0312 from the Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods

(Enclosure)



Responses to Housing Programme consultation with tenants and applicants

We conducted a random sample survey of tenants and housing register applicants. This document sets out the data on responses to the questions posed. It also provides a summary of the comments made by respondents.

Note: the survey comments provided below must not be taken in isolation but should be considered in conjunction with the other statistical data in this appendix. The summary of comments provides some colour and context to the statistical analysis.

Responses to questions posed in a postal survey and related to the Tenancy Strategy:

Do you think that the Council and RSLs should be able to use flexible tenancies instead of lifetime tenancies?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	121	49.2	54.3
No	102	41.5	45.7
Total	223	90.7	100
No response	23	9.3	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 54.3% Yes / 45.7% No

Comments/Contextual Information:

Comments from those respondents who considered that flexible tenure **should** be used by landlords:

- There was a very strong feeling that the use of fixed term tenure could motivate tenants to comply with their tenancy conditions, and help landlords deal with anti social behaviour. 45% of people who made a comment expressed such a view.
- *"Because circumstances change and more needy people could be helped"*. There was recognition that peoples circumstances and housing needs change (21%). There was awareness that there are high housing needs to be met and thoughts expressed that homes should be made available to meet those needs (13%)

Comments from those respondents who considered that flexible tenure **should not** be used by landlords:

- *"People need to feel secure to be the best citizens"*. There was a strong feeling that tenants should be given security and be able to live in their homes without fear of being asked to move on (30%).
- There were also views expressed that security motivates tenants to comply with tenancy conditions and invest time and money into their homes (10%). There was some concern that insecurity breeds anxiety for vulnerable individuals (5%) and possibly wider social problems.

- There were also comments that fixed term tenure is not fair for tenants who abide by their tenancy conditions and suggestions that fixed term is appropriate for known 'bad' tenants.

Whether in support of or against the use of fixed term tenure, concerns about management of anti social behaviour are evident.

Questions were then posed about the factors which should be taken into account if flexible tenancies were to be used:

Factor 1: The family no longer needs a property of that size

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	162	65.9	75.7
No	52	21.1	24.3
Total	214	87.0	100
No response	32	13.0	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 75.7% Yes / 24.3% No

Comments/Contextual Information:

Comments from those respondents who considered that the household needs (property size) **should** be taken into account when reviewing fixed term tenancies.

- *"If the tenant no longer needs the size of the property it is more of a reason to help them end one tenancy and be offered a new one of a more suitable size."* This summarises the overwhelming majority of comments made, with most people indicating that they thought under occupied homes could be better used to meet housing needs, but many concerned that tenants should be helped into a suitable alternative.

Comments from those respondents who considered that the household needs (property size) **should not** be taken into account when reviewing fixed term tenancies.

- *"It's their home"*. This sums of 40% of comments on this topic. Respondents recognised the emotional connection people feel with a family home and the value grandparents or extended family can offer in having family to stay.
- Again, it was suggested by some that alternative accommodation might be offered to those under occupying family homes.

Factor 2: The family have a big enough income to afford alternative housing

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	126	51.2	61.5
No	79	32.2	38.5
Total	205	83.3	100
No response	41	16.7	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 61.5% Yes / 38.5% No

Comments/Contextual Information:

Comments from those respondents who considered that the household income **should** be taken into account when reviewing fixed term tenancies.

- *"If they have that big an income they should be encouraged to buy and make way for those that can't buy."* The overwhelming response of this group was that social housing should be for people who cannot afford alternatives, and so if a tenant can, they should make way for a household in need.

Comments from those respondents who considered that the household income **should not** be taken into account when reviewing fixed term tenancies.

- *"You should not penalise people for getting on and working."* 12% of people questioned why tenants should be expected to leave their homes, just because they had improved their financial situation. Some referred to the economic benefit such households bring and thought that so long as rent is being paid, good tenants should be able to stay.
- 7% referred to the current economic climate and or fact that a household's fortunes can change very quickly.

Questions were also asked about whether certain households should be excluded from flexible tenure and given 'lifetime' tenancies:

Exclude 1: People aged 60 years and over

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	214	87.0	94.3
No	13	5.3	5.7
Total	227	92.3	100
No response	19	7.7	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 94.3% Yes / 5.7% No

Exclude 2: People moving into specialist or supported accommodation

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	204	82.9	92.3
No	17	6.9	7.7
Total	221	89.8	100
No response	25	10.2	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 92.3% Yes / 7.7% No

Exclude 3: People with dependent children living with them

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Yes	145	58.9	72.9
No	54	22.0	27.1
Total	199	80.9	100
No response	47	19.1	
Total	246	100	

Summary response: 72.9% Yes / 27.1% No

Comments/Contextual Information:

- *“Vulnerable people need to feel secure”*. Respondents largely supported security of tenure for these groups, clearly considering they need some kind of protection from the uncertainties of fixed term tenure. This was especially true in relation to older people.
- *“A lifetime can be a long time and peoples circumstances change”* A minority expressed a view that anyone’s situation can change, young or old, with or without children , and so all tenancies should be reviewed.

Analysis of respondents:

Ethnicity of respondents:

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
White British	229	93.1	96.2
White Other	7	2.8	2.9
Mixed Other	1	0.4	0.4
Other	1	0.4	0.4
Total	238	96.7	100
Missing	8	3.3	
Total	246	100	

Age of respondents:

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
18 – 24	4	0.8	0.8
25 – 34	25	10.2	10.2
35 – 44	24	8.6	8.6
45 – 54	42	21.9	21.9
55 – 64	44	21.9	21.9
65 – 74	50	18.8	18.8
75 and over	56	18.0	18.0
Total	245	100	100
No Response	1	100	100
Total	246	100	100

Gender of respondents:

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent
Male	72	29.3	29.3
Female	165	67.1	67.1
No response	9	3.7	3.7
Total	246	100	100