

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

7 JUNE 2021

ANNUAL TENANCY AUDIT PROCESS: “GETTING TO KNOW YOU” VISITS

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information on the planned implementation of a rolling programme of tenancy audits across all Council tenancies.
- 1.2 For Members to support the programme with tenants within the communities in which they serve.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 There are existing processes in place in which tenancy audits are carried out as part of the management of tenancies. As a landlord, we need a regular mechanism for the Council to check, update and maintain the data we hold on the tenants living in our housing stock.
- 2.2 Current and proposed Government guidance including the Social Housing Charter, places the focus on landlords to ensure the safety of tenants and to promote their right to recourse should we fail to keep them safe or listen to their views; we can only do this if we know them, how best to communicate with them and how their accommodation meets their needs.
- 2.3 Our approach to making sure our tenant data is regularly updated is through “getting to know you” visits. This annual home visit will allow us to:
 - Ensure the accommodation is suitable for the household e.g. if there was an emergency, that safe evacuation can happen;
 - Maintain sustainable tenancies and proactive tenancy management;
 - Identify any support needs within the household;
 - How they would like us to communicate and consult with them;
 - Ensure the property is being maintained in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement;
 - Identify Tenancy Fraud – usually subletting or unauthorised occupation through checking occupant details;
 - Check for any outstanding repairs and that the property is safe and secure;
 - Ensure appropriate levels of occupation;
 - Provide the opportunity to improve tenant profile information to support better tailoring of services; and
 - Engage proactively with our tenants, let them know their views are important to us and their satisfaction with us as their landlord is our priority.

3.0 Implementation

- 3.1 Our current stock levels are 5543 properties; split between general needs 2948 and 2625 supported accommodation.
- 3.2 Housing with Care facilities: Gladstone, Vale View, Armstrong Gardens and Broadleaves will be excluded from this programme as all tenants living in this accommodation receive regular visits and support alongside annual reviews which include the completion of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) that is enacted in the event of a fire.
- 3.3 A two year programme will be formulated to ensure all households as detailed in 3.1 are visited.
- 3.4 Visits will mainly be carried out by our Tenancy & Estates colleagues and where other front line colleagues are carrying out their normal duties, i.e Income Management and visiting tenants it is envisaged a Tenancy Audit is carried out and captured on our Housing System Capita, to prevent duplication.
- 3.5 The programme will be managed as a portfolio by a Senior Housing Officer and progress and trends/findings will be shared with Homes and Communities Committee.

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 The Council has made a commitment to ensuring that it complies with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010; undertaking this programme will improve the data we hold on tenants therefore identifying anyone with 'protected characteristics' under the legislation thus allowing services to be tailored as appropriate.

5.0 Digital Implications

- 5.1 The Council has made a commitment to encourage the use of our digital services; undertaking this programme will improve the data we hold on tenants therefore identifying anyone who prefers this method of communication or requires further support to become digitally engaged.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Staffing levels within Tenancy and Estates are almost up to establishment so no additional resources are required.
- 6.2 It is possible that this proactive approach may find previously unreported repairs and issues within households that need to be addressed. Again, this will be managed within existing resources.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 This activity supports these objectives:

- Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area
- Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents

8.0 Comments of Director(s) and/or Housing Advisory Group

8.1 This is an essential activity to improve the maturity of our tenant data and will serve a number of purposes as outlined in the report, including helping to combat issues of property condition so early intervention can be instigated when a tenancy is showing signs of failing and the tenant needs support.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION that:

- a) **the Committee note the planned implementation of a rolling programme of tenancy audit visits across all Council tenancies; and that,**
- b) **Members support the programme within their communities.**

Reason for Recommendation

To update the Committee on the planned implementation of a rolling programme of tenancy audit visits across all Council tenancies

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Julie Davidson (Business Manager – Housing & Estates Management).

Suzanne Shead

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