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Supplementary information for Tenant Scrutiny Board on 21 January 2015

Pages 1-6: Agenda item 5: The following information was submitted as part of the Board's inquiry into Annual Tenancy Visits (ATVs):

- Response from Housing Leeds to questions submitted by Tenant Scrutiny Board
- Potential questions for visit to Wakefield District Housing.

Pages 7-8: Agenda item 6: A list of groups containing tenant representation was submitted to support the Board's work regarding future recruitment.

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Annual Tenancy Visits – Questions for 21st January 2015 Meeting

1 Is there an up to date ward by ward figure of the offices ATV performance and how many have it target?

Please see data below, per office and Ward

WARD	Visited		Total	%
	No	Yes		
ADEL & WHARFEDALE	294	357	651	55%
ALWOODLEY	295	889	1184	75%
ARDSLEY & ROBIN HOOD	300	584	884	66%
ARMLEY	1009	1843	2852	65%
BEESTON & HOLBECK	1222	1032	2254	46%
BRAMLEY & STANNINGLEY	1114	1686	2800	60%
BURMANTOFTS & RICHMOND HILL	1434	3020	4454	68%
CALVERLEY & FARSLEY	218	553	771	72%
CHAPEL ALLERTON	744	1228	1972	62%
CITY & HUNSLET	717	1062	1779	60%
CROSSGATES & WHINMOOR	947	936	1883	50%
FARNLEY & WORTLEY	922	1595	2517	63%
GARFORTH & SWILLINGTON	134	762	896	85%
GIPTON & HAREHILLS	650	2099	2749	76%
GUISELEY & RAWDON	339	385	724	53%
HAREWOOD	64	339	403	84%
HEADINGLEY	84	72	156	46%
HORSFORTH	536	384	920	42%
HYDE PARK & WOODHOUSE	555	1586	2141	74%
KILLINGBECK & SEACROFT	1708	2792	4500	62%
KIPPAX & METHLEY	203	950	1153	82%
KIRKSTALL	987	1497	2484	60%
MIDDLETON PARK	1806	2341	4147	56%
MOORTOWN	89	422	511	83%
MORLEY NORTH	274	672	946	71%
MORLEY SOUTH	364	754	1118	67%
OTLEY & YEADON	675	693	1368	51%
PUDSEY	594	1116	1710	65%
ROTHWELL	487	807	1294	62%
ROUNDHAY	139	491	630	78%
TEMPLE NEWSAM	722	841	1563	54%
WEETWOOD	672	731	1403	52%
WETHERBY	101	768	869	88%
City Total	20399	35287	55686	63%

PATCH/OFFICE	Visited		Total	%
	No	Yes		
ARMLEY	882	1765	2647	67%
BEESTON & HOLBECK	1222	1033	2255	46%
BELLE ISLE - TMO	592	1339	1931	69%
BRAMLEY	1241	1764	3005	59%
BURMANTOFTS	1075	1859	2934	63%
CITY AND HUNSLET	717	1062	1779	60%
GIPTON	684	2382	3066	78%
HORSFORTH	1844	1819	3663	50%
HAREHILLS & CHAPELTOWN	227	419	646	65%
HALTON MOOR & OSMONDTHORPE	662	790	1452	54%
KIPPAX	337	1712	2049	84%
KIRKSTALL	1001	1506	2507	60%
LITTLE LONDON	601	1634	2235	73%
MEANWOOD	517	816	1333	61%
MIDDLETON	1214	1001	2215	45%
MOORTOWN	519	1737	2256	77%
MORLEY	771	1837	2608	70%
PUDSEY	813	1672	2485	67%
RICHMOND HILL	339	1002	1341	75%
ROTHWELL	654	980	1634	60%
SEACROFT NORTH	1180	1362	2542	54%
SEACROFT SOUTH	514	1306	1820	72%
SWARCLIFFE	1007	987	1994	49%
WEETWOOD	696	746	1442	52%
WETHERBY	169	1165	1334	87%
WORTLEY	921	1592	2513	63%
CITY TOTAL	20399	35287	55686	63%

Data as at rent week 40

2 Does the cost of doing an ATV take into account for the many missed attempts and can it be separated from the overall cost?

The calculation of cost is based on average time to undertake a visit, every visit is different, and some visits are undertaken relatively quickly with access gained at the first attempt. However, other visits may take several attempts to gain access. We have allowed 10 minutes within calculations to account for abortive visits; however, it is not possible to provide a specific cost for visits with no access.

3 Has subletting detection figures increased since ATVs were introduced?

Tenancy fraud records are held from 2009/10 since securing government funding. Since that time the law has changed making Housing Fraud a criminal offence. The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 makes it a criminal offence for council tenants to unlawfully sublet their home. Councils also have wider powers of prosecution and require tenants to pay the profits of unlawful subletting on conviction.

Fraud Investigations running total	
2009/10	82
2010/11	83
2011/12	39
2012/13	90
2013/14	231
2014/15 (to date)	186
Total	728

The increase in detection of fraud in 2013 is attributed to the appointment of 3 dedicated Tenancy Fraud Officers taking up posts. It can be seen that there has been an increase in fraud detection since their appointment. Whilst issues of tenancy fraud are picked up at annual tenancy visits, records do not confirm either way if there has been an increase in detection as a direct result of annual tenancy visits.

4 Have Housing undertaken any costings on introducing PDAs (or equivalent)

We are in the early stages of exploring options for the use of PDAs as a pilot within 2 Area Housing Offices subject to budget availability.

The effectiveness of the pilot if approved will be evaluated prior to rolling out across all Area Offices. A visit is planned to Wakefield District Housing on 27th January 2015 which will provide an excellent opportunity to see PDAs in practical use within a peer organisation.

5 What's the real extent of the problem of Sub-Letting in Leeds?

Subletting has significant consequences and impacts on waiting list demand and related costs for emergency housing required for homeless (roofless applicants).

6 What's the real cost of Sub Letting in Leeds?

Whilst it is difficult to give an actual cost, the effect of sub-letting is a knock on effect of more people being on the housing waiting list waiting for home and additional costs of emergency accommodation. Also, the detection of unauthorised sub-letting could also lead to detection of housing benefit fraud.

7 What is the cost to the Council of detection?

The Council has 3 Housing Fraud Officers, one in each area, East, South and West. This equates to

an approximate cost (including on costs) of £28,697 x 3 = £86,091. It's difficult to give an actual cost of the full range of tenancy fraud detection as it is a generic part of a Housing Officer role and issues of fraud are picked up in a number of ways including annual tenancy visits.

8 Is the Annual Tenancy Visit to all tenants a 'Legal Requirement'?

There is no legal requirement to carry out an annual tenancy visit. The recommendation came following Audit Commission recommendations in 2008. The purpose of the visit is to support the principals of tenancy sustainment and to understand customer needs. The visit is a comprehensive and quality visit once a year to ensure support needs are met and to ensure conditions of tenancy are adhered to, including the detection of tenancy fraud.

9 As a supplementary, do we use other methods to determine sub-letting?

Yes, several sources are used such as; data matching through the National Fraud Initiative, internal data is shared with other Council Services, including Leeds Benefit Service and Leeds Home Ownership Team (previously known as right to buy) .There is a whistle blowing processing which the Tenancy Fraud Officers manage. When requests for succession and assignment are made checks are undertaken to confirm, eligibility. Arrangements have been made to hold a tenancy fraud awareness week 2nd to 6th February 2015, to raise awareness of tenancy fraud, including presentation of information to a number of audiences including Tenant and Resident Associations. Further information about this can be provided if required.

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Possible questions for visit to Wakefield District Housing

1. What was the rationale behind the introduction of PDAs?
2. What have been the main benefits to introducing PDAs?
3. What have been the main challenges to introducing PDAs?
4. Has there been a financial benefit to introducing PDAs?
5. Is there any manual updating still required that cannot be undertaken using PDAs?
6. Is it possible to access all services and information using PDAs, for example, booking a repair?
7. What type of housing software is used and why was this chosen as opposed to other housing software available?
8. Have officers experienced any technical issues with the use of PDAs and if so how easily have these been resolved?
9. What level of training has been provided for staff to use PDAs?

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Is there in existence a list of all groups (that meet) which have tenant reps on?

Yes we are aware of all our groups. These include:-

- Local registered tenant and resident groups
- Housing Advisory Panels
- Leeds High Rise Advisory Group
- Rainbow Roofs
- Service Advisors (formerly known as Tenant Inspectors)
- Several Repairs focus groups

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