

**REPORT OF: CHIEF OFFICER, HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT TO: TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD**

**DATE: 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL TENANCY VISITS (ATV's)**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

**SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES**

1. In April 2014 a new system for the delivery of ATV's was implemented for the City, shown at Appendix 1.
2. This report is to provide Scrutiny Board with an update on annual tenancy visits. The report identifies the purpose of the visits, performance in 2013/14 and progress since April 2014.

**RECOMMENDATION**

4. Scrutiny Board are asked to note the contents of the report, and provide feedback on the impact of the visits.

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Board with a position statement to support and inform their inquiry.

The report identifies the reasons for the visits, performance and amendments to the process to date which have been designed to make them more effective.

## 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A City wide process for Annual Tenancy Visits was introduced in April 2014 to ensure a consistent process.
- 2.2 The new structure within Housing Management, to be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 increases staffing on the front line which will ensure an improved and consistent service can be delivered. Housing Officers will have reduced patch sizes to deliver a more intensive and personalized housing management service to tenants including a quality ATV.

## 3 MAIN ISSUES

### KEY PURPOSE OF VISITS

- 2.1 The purpose of annual tenancy visits are to :-
- 3.2 **Meet tenants needs and expectations.** The visits will enable us to have a conversation with the tenant to discuss how they feel about their home, neighborhood and community and how satisfied they are with the service provision. This will enable us to gauge how the services we are delivering are meeting customers' needs and expectations.
- 3.3 **Proactive tenancy management.** The ATV is one element of proactive service delivery to enable us to enforce of tenancy conditions. Tenancy visits will ensure we identify homes are not being damaged, neglected or otherwise used in an obviously criminal or inappropriate manner.
- 3.4 **Customer focus and support needs.** The visits will help is to identify where tenants are need additional help and support with sustaining their tenancy. By being proactive we can offer support and assistance before an issue become more problematic. The visits enable us to ensure our customer profiling data is up to date to ensure we provide service appropriate to the neighbourhoods needs.
- 3.5 **Sub-letting / Tenancy Fraud.** The ATV's are used to confirm that each of the properties we manage is occupied by the named tenant as their principal home and has not been sublet. The visits are unannounced and as a consequence have the benefit of surprise and discovering who is actually living at the property. Where sub-letting or tenancy fraud has occurred action is taken to recover the property.

- 3.6 Evaluation of the annual tenancy visit process and the formation of the single Housing Management Service have highlighted the need to review all Housing Management Policies and Procedures to ensure quality and consistency.

In addition to the review of ATV's key in conjunction with the development of the new structure processes and procedures for letting council houses are changing to ensure we have increased information and understanding of new tenants housing and support needs, there is a new emphasis on highlighting responsibilities to new tenants with regard to their home and neighborhood, all new tenants will be visited at the start of their tenancies and there will be a formal review before 6 months. In addition all Contractors undertake tenancy verification and referral to the housing officer if there are any concerns.

## **PERFORMANCE**

- 3.7 In 2013/14 73.08% of council tenants received an ATV. Between April 2014 and June 2014 20.90% of tenants had received a visit, all tenants will have been visited by March 2015. A performance report is attached as appendix 2.

## **4 CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1.1 ATV's allow a conversation with tenants about their home, neighborhood and community, and an opportunity for feedback on Housing and Council Services.
- 4.1.2 The ATV enables the Housing Officer to identify where follow up visits are required; this may include personalized support and /or safeguarding.

### **4.2 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / COHESION AND INTEGRATION**

- 4.2.1 Undertaking ATVs will increase our customer knowledge and enable a more detailed customer profile to be developed to inform policy review and development.

### **4.3 COUNCIL POLICIES AND CITY PRIORITIES**

- 4.3.1 Delivery of Annual Tenancy Visits is one of the 6 key priorities for Housing.

### **4.4 RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.4.1 The Housing Management structure to be implemented October 2014 is designed to deliver an intensive personalized housing management service delivered by focusing resources on the front line.

### **4.5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND CALL IN**

- 4.5.1 There are no specific issues to be considered.

### **4.6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.6.1 Applying safe operational working practices whilst undertaking ATVs is essential.
- 4.6.2 All staff undertaking home visits have had training in Health and Safety and Lone Working.

**5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The new Housing Management structure is designed to deliver a personalized service which meets tenants needs and delivery through more intensive work on small patch sizes will enable Housing Officers to gain a greater understanding of tenants needs and respond effectively to issues within the neighborhood, ATV's are a key element of this approach.

**6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to note the contents of the report and provide feedback.

**7 BACKGROUND PAPERS<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None