

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Date: 16th January 2012

Subject: Recommendation Tracking

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report sets out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review of the Council's Housing Lettings Process.
2. The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Scrutiny Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations; those progressing to plan; and those where there is either an obstacle or progress is not adequate. The Board will then be able to take further action as appropriate.

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to:
 - Agree those recommendations which no longer require monitoring;
 - Identify any recommendations where progress is unsatisfactory and determine the action the Board wishes to take as a result.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review of the Council's Housing Lettings Process.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Following its review of the Housing Lettings Process, the former Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board published its final report and recommendations in May 2010. A formal response to the recommendations was considered by the Scrutiny Board in September 2010.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations; those progressing to plan; and those where there is either an obstacle or progress is not adequate. The Board will then be able to take further action as appropriate.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A standard set of criteria has been produced to enable the Board to assess progress. These are presented in the form of a flow chart at Appendix 1. The questions in the flow chart should help to decide whether a recommendation has been completed, and if not whether further action is required.
- 3.2 To assist Members with this task the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in liaison with the Chair, has given a draft status for each recommendation. The Board is asked to confirm whether these assessments are appropriate and to change them where they are not. Details of progress against each recommendation is set out within the table at Appendix 2.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Where internal or external consultation processes have been undertaken with regard to responding to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations, details of any such consultation will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Where consideration has been given to the impact on equality areas, as defined in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme, this will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 This section is not relevant to this report.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 Details of any significant resource and financial implications linked to the Scrutiny recommendations will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 This section is not relevant to this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations. Progress in responding to those recommendations arising from the Scrutiny review of the Council's Housing Lettings Process is detailed within the table at Appendix 2 for Members' consideration.

6 Recommendations

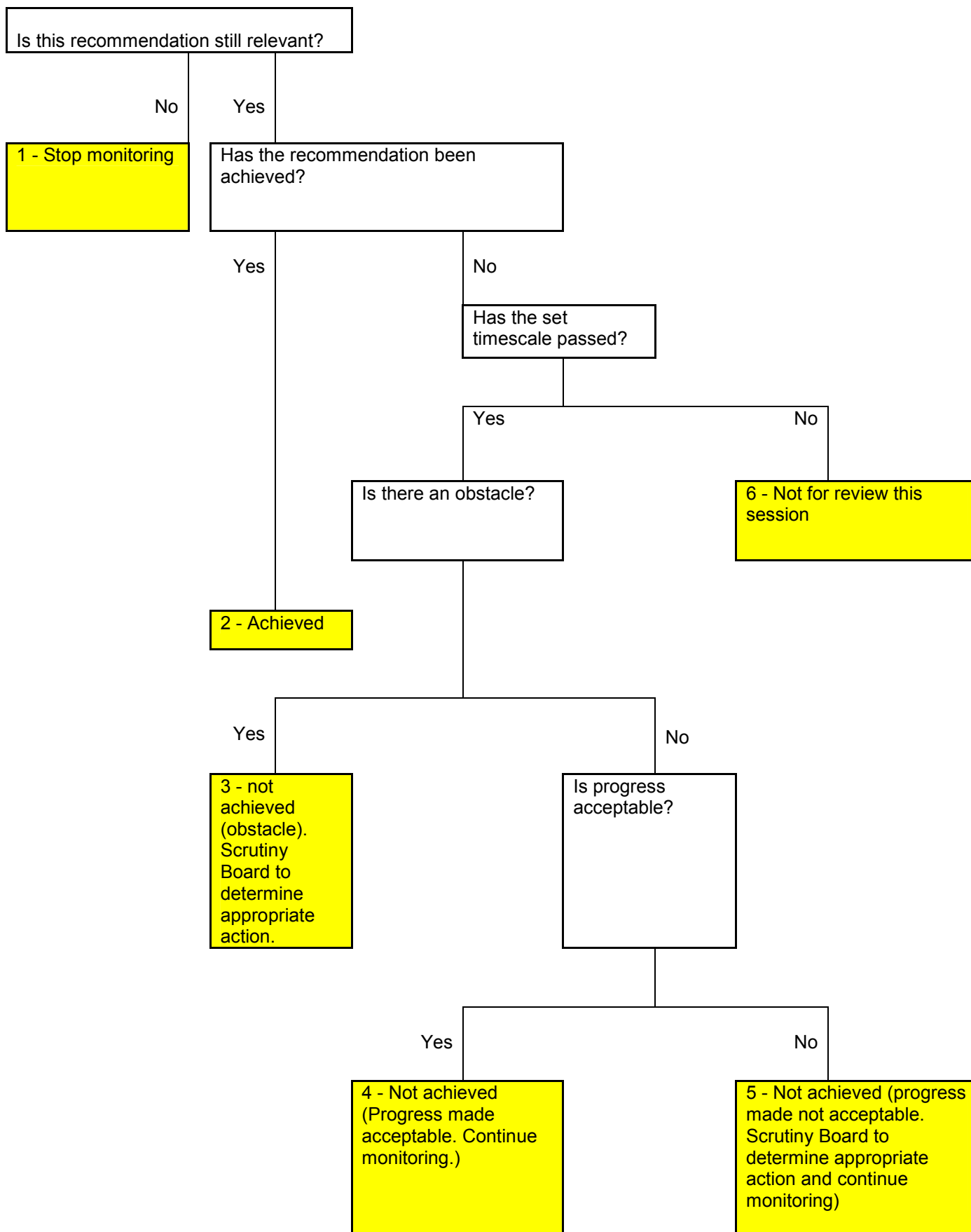
6.1 Members are asked to:

- Agree those recommendations which no longer require monitoring;
- Identify any recommendations where progress is unsatisfactory and determine the action the Board wishes to take as a result.

7 Background documents

7.1 Housing Lettings Process – Statement of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board. May 2010.

Recommendation tracking flowchart and classifications:
Questions to be Considered by Scrutiny Boards



Inquiry into Housing Lettings Process (May 2010)

Categories

- 1 - Stop monitoring
- 2 - Achieved
- 3 - Not achieved (Obstacle)
- 4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 5 - Not achieved (Progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 6 - Not for review this session

Recommendation for monitoring	Evidence of progress and contextual information	Status (categories 1 – 6) (to be completed by Scrutiny)	Complete
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1</p> <p>That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing an action plan over the next 6 months to improve the coordination of data shared between Housing, Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and local NHS Trusts to help identify and address the housing support needs of an individual.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>Officers from the Strategic Landlord Group will lead the review. The review will begin by assessing the information requested on both the common assessment framework and the single assessment process and that already gathered in the recently revised housing process, for which a new IT system has been implemented. Any potential changes will need to be factored into the IT development programme.</p>		

<p>As part of this action plan, consideration should be given to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to determine exactly what information from the Single Assessment Process and Common Assessment Framework processes can and should be shared to assist the lettings process in terms of identifying and addressing the housing support needs of an individual (ii) to consider any potential IT data issues and resource implications in terms of developing appropriate mechanisms that will aid the coordination of such data <p>That this action plan is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.</p>	<p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new system of verifying information received on housing application form has been introduced for all new applications, including checks on ID. • Specific protocols are in place to ensure relevant information from Social Care and Health is shared. Data from the SAP and CAF processes are used to assist the lettings process, including protocols in place with CYPSC to refer households in need for housing, eg care leavers and looked after children, hospital discharge from Becklin Centre, MAPP Protocol, and hospital discharge on medical grounds (eg delayed discharge cases) • In relation to support needs, a risk assessment is already in place for assessments undertaken by Leeds Housing Options. In addition, ENEhL have used a risk assessment tool. These have been used as the basis for a new risk assessment process which will apply to all housing need assessments undertaken by the ALMOs / BITMO • Ultimately, the risk assessment will be integrated into the computer system ArchHouse Plus, once IT has been tested and a training programme delivered to ALMO/ BITMO staff • In the interim, a manual version of the risk assessment will be piloted for housing needs assessments undertaken by ALMOs/BITMO • IT implementation of risk assessment workflow to follow, pending resource availability 	<p>5 - Not achieved (progress made not acceptable. Scrutiny Board to determine appropriate action and continue monitoring)</p>	
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<p>RECOMMENDATION 2</p> <p>That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing a formal data sharing protocol between the ALMOs, the Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to ensure that local intelligence about prospective and existing tenants is systematically shared as part of the new Support Needs Assessment to inform the application process and enable appropriate action to be taken.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>The current review of the Anti Social behaviour process in the city (termed the Quest project) remit is to ensure that there is an improved process through the council teams (such as ALMOs/ BITMO, Anti Social Behaviour unit, Environmental health, Adults and Children’s services, Legal services) involved in tackling anti social behaviour and other statutory teams, especially the Police. As part of this review consideration is being given to the collocation of Police, ALMO and Anti Social behaviour staff. As a result, improved data sharing will be developed between the agencies. In addition, a protocol between the Police, Community Safety and ALMOs/ BITMO will be developed as result of the working more collaboratively.</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendation has been superseded by the Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Review and the new structure of the multi-agency anti-social behaviour teams. Harvinder Saimbhi met with Cllr Anderson in July 2011 to go through the new ASB structure. • As with regards to application process this is something that is developed separately and information is shared if required. • The legal basis for sharing information with police is through a ‘section 115’ request – ALMOs need to have evidence to justify request, police will not ‘vet to let’. • Specific information sharing agreements have been developed with West Yorkshire Police for West North West Homes ‘Good Neighbour’ local lettings policy. 	<p>5 - Not achieved (progress made not acceptable. Scrutiny Board to determine appropriate action and continue monitoring)</p>	
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<p>RECOMMENDATION 3</p> <p>That the data sharing improvements set out within recommendations 1 and 2 are also used to enable more effective enforcement of Introductory and Demoted Tenancies in future.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>As a result of improvements from Recommendation 1 and 2 as stated there will be a greater amount of data sharing. In addition, other mechanisms have been put in place such as Strategic Landlord Group have asked ALMOs to more closely manage tenants in their Introductory Tenancy period, proposing a minimum number of visits to be undertaken.</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced data sharing between the council and its partners - especially the statutory agencies - will assist in the delivery of effective housing management and its enforcement. • Since the Scrutiny Inquiry, case law has been set by the Pinnock and Hall case in 2010. These cases confirmed that Introductory tenancies were a legitimate tool to use to enforce tenancies at the beginning of their life, but further safeguards were needed in light of a review from a challenge relating the Human Rights Act. • This means the ALMOs/BITMO must undertake a 'proportionality test' before legal proceedings are undertaken against an Introductory tenant. This test includes documenting any vulnerabilities that a tenant may have, and how have these been addressed by the landlord in providing appropriate levels of support, such as through multi agency working providing support, or other mitigation measures • Legal guidance has been provided to ALMOs to reflect the changes resulting from the Pinnock case 	<p>5 - Not achieved (progress made not acceptable. Scrutiny Board to determine appropriate action and continue monitoring)</p>	
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<p>RECOMMENDATION 4</p> <p>That any concerns or complaints made to the ALMOs about the behaviour of a particular tenant are acted upon with urgency, with an interim response given within 5 working days.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>ALMOs and BITMO currently have Service standards to respond to incidents of anti social behaviour within at least 5 working days. The Anti Social Behaviour Review is undertaking process mapping to improve these services.</p> <p>Current position: ALMOs have a target to respond to stage 1 complaints in writing within 10 working days. This is met by all ALMOs/ BITMO. Moreover, analysis of a snapshot of complaints dealt with in August 2011 shows this target is generally exceeded, with responses completed within 7 - 9 days.</p> <p>In terms of serious complaints such as those relating to anti social behaviour, ALMOs make initial contact the customer within 5 working days, and then this is followed by a letter confirming action undertaken, and an investigation shortly afterwards.</p>	<p>4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 5</p> <p>That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing a protocol between the Leeds Housing Options Service and the Leeds ALMOs to clarify appropriate stages of referral to the Leeds Housing Options Service for preventative housing related support services to be assessed and coordinated.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>A commitment has been made within the Leeds Housing Strategy Action Plan 2010-2012 and the Housing Strategy and Solutions Group Service Plan for the Leeds Housing Options Service to develop joint working protocols with each of the Leeds ALMOs and BITMO. Officers from the Strategic Landlord Group will also be involved in this work. It would not be possible to prescribe all the different circumstances that would trigger a referral/intervention, and each case will need to be assessed on its individual merits, but the protocols will provide broad guidelines for officers. Interim measures are in place where officers from the Paralegal Team of the Strategic Landlord Group are notifying officers from Leeds Housing Options Service of households who are subject to eviction proceedings because of rent arrears.</p>		

	<p>Current position:</p> <p>A joint working protocol has been established between Leeds Housing Options Service and West North West Homes Leeds to assist WNWhL tenants and family members, for example, a grown up child could be referred for accommodation and support services.</p> <p>A referral may result in interventions including homeless prevention initiatives, housing-related support services and housing management services.</p> <p>A key element of the protocol concerns tenants at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears. This ensures Leeds Housing Options are notified at an early stage about potential homeless cases and can advise the tenant of their likely rehousing prospects.</p> <p>The protocol will be rolled out to East North East Homes and Aire Valley Homes.</p>	<p>4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 6</p> <p>That the personal case conferencing approach used by the Leeds Housing Options Service is adopted as a good practice model as part of the housing management process for those tenants with acute and complex support needs.</p>	<p>Formal response (September 2010):</p> <p>Strategic Landlord has worked in partnership with ALMOs and BITMO to develop a more case conference approach to Lettings assessment. Examples are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference. This is a forum led by Police that bring all stakeholders including ALMOs/ BITMO together to formulate a plan to minimise the risk of domestic violence for victims and their families. 2. Adaptations service. where joint case conferences between the agencies has resulted in a more appropriate adaptation installed in a customers house, or a more timely rehousing. 		

	<p>3. The Family Intervention project relies on case conferencing between a number of agencies to support a family to reduce occurrences of anti social behaviour.</p> <p>Current position:</p> <p>The above examples remain in operation. Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hate Crime Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing – to develop a package of support, including assistance with rehousing, for customers experiencing hate crime• Disabled Children’s Group meeting to monitor the rehousing of households with a disabled child	<p>4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)</p>	
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