

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee – 3 June 2013

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| Agenda Item | 8 |
| Report No | CIA/027/13 |

Tenancy Management and Partnership Working

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Housing and Property

Summary

This report describes the activity and partnership working in relation to Tenancy Management and gives details of the activity across all tenures for the Inverness City and surrounding area from April 2012 to March 2013.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing and Property Service provides housing of a permanent and temporary nature using leases and occupancy agreements in relation to these. The most commonly used agreement is for Council tenants who are provided with a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST).
- 1.2 Each type of lease or occupancy agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities for both the Council and the tenant. These are legally binding documents. The focus of this report is the responsibilities of the tenant or occupant which relate to Tenancy Management. These can be summarised as the need to keep the tenancy and any associated garden ground in good order and to have respect for other residents in the area.
- 1.3 The details of the various leases and occupancy agreements can be found on the Council's Intranet under Service Management, Housing and Property Services, Housing Procedures, Guidance and Information.
- 1.4 An important part of the partnership with tenants is to ensure the effective collection of rent. There are separate arrangements in place to deal with rent arrears which do not form part of this report.

2 Housing and Property Staff involved with Tenancy Management

- 2.1 The Housing and Property Manager has overall responsibility for the landlord function and a designated Principal Housing Officer, reporting to the Assistant Housing Manager, leads the Tenancy Management Team. The team comprises of three Housing Management Officers, three Community Wardens and an Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Officer.
- 2.2 Members will note from **Appendix 1** the range and number of activities that the team dealt with in 2012-2013. It will be appreciated that this is a busy and important team within the Housing and Property Service.

3 Partnership Working

- 3.1 Tenancy Management matters are dealt with by the team as they come across them as they interact with the community and in their day to day work, those reported to them by Members and through the Council's Lagan system. The team work closely with other services within the Council such as Environmental Health Officers, the Dog Warden, Legal Services and Social Work. They also liaise with Northern Constabulary at Chief Inspector level and with local Beat Officers.
- 3.2 An example of partnership working with Northern Constabulary is Operation Notebook where joint visits are carried out with Housing staff and the police. These joint visits are used to advise that both the police and the Council, as landlord, will be taking action to curb any unacceptable behaviour in or around premises.
- 3.3 The Housing and Property Service is the lead service for the Council in relation to anti-social behaviour and unfortunately a small number of residents in the community, across all tenures, behave in an unacceptable way. These individuals sometimes have chaotic lifestyles and multiple and complex needs. The Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership Group (ASBPG), which meets every six weeks, pools its expertise to seek ways of resolving what are termed "Priority Cases".
- 3.4 The ASBPG is made up of representatives from Housing and Property, Legal Services, TEC Services, Social Work and Northern Constabulary. Ward Managers also attend as do the local housing associations, Cairn and Albyn, who also have issues with some of their tenants. Other officers and organisations can be invited to the meeting as required. The ASBPG meeting is chaired by the Housing and Property Manager. Outwith the ASBPG meeting case conferences are arranged if required.
- 3.5 All members of the Tenancy Management Team can be involved in any particular case. Good communication is essential and to facilitate this there is in place an Information Sharing Protocol which allows two way exchange of information. Incidents reported to the police and the tracking of criminal proceedings can therefore be recorded. A new module was introduced into the Housing Information System from April 2013 to assist with the recording of cases. Evidence and statements are gathered in order to build a case so that appropriate and effective action can be taken.
- 3.6 There are a number of actions which can be applied:
 - Advice and support
 - Mediation
 - Acceptable Behaviour Contract
 - Unacceptable Behaviour Notice
 - Anti-social Behaviour Order (ASBO)
 - Voluntary Transfer
 - Compulsory Transfer
 - Eviction
- 3.7 Members will be aware that when seeking actions that require to be put before the Sherriff Court by Legal Services that evidence is needed. Obtaining evidence sufficient for legal action can be challenging at times due to the reticence of those affected in coming forward. The Council's duties in relation to the wellbeing of children under GIRFEC and homelessness have also to be balanced in considering what action is appropriate.

3.8 The Antisocial Behaviour Strategy and related documents can be found on the Council's internet at the following link:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/housing/anti-socialbehaviourandneighbourhood/>

4 Implications

4.1 There are no specific resource, legal, equality, climate change or risk implications arising from this report.

5 Recommendation

5.1 Members are invited to note the work carried out by the Tenancy Management Team in conjunction with our partners and the recorded activity of the team in 2012/13 as given in **Appendix 1**.

Signature:

Designation: **Depute Chief Executive/Director of Housing and Property**

Date: 20 May 2013

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Appendix 1

| Inverness City and Surrounding Area Anti-Social Behaviour Activity 2012/13 | |
|---|---|
| Community Warden Activity – All tenure | |
| Garden Letters | 603 (council tenancies only) |
| Fly tipping/rubbish | 166 (32 incidents reported at Glendoe Terr) |
| Low level neighbour disputes/noise | 79 |
| Dog fouling and barking | 54 |
| ASB (anti-social behaviour) letter drops | 32 |
| Vandalism/property damage | 31 |
| Statements taken | 23 |
| Other animal/bird nuisance | 20 |
| Graffiti | 20 |
| Bins | 16 |
| Abandoned Vehicles | 13 |
| Multi agency meetings | 25 |
| Youth conduct, including bullying | 13 |
| Needle pick-ups/reports | 3 |
| Mobile and foot patrols | Every day mainly around South Kessock, Merkinch, Ballifeary, Dalneigh and Hilton. |
| Housing Management Officer Activity – Council tenancies only | |
| Written Warnings | 58 |
| Noise monitoring installations | 36 |
| Multi agency targeted initiatives | 20 |
| Notice of Seeking Possessions | 11 |
| Operation Notebook Stage 1 | 10 |
| Children referrals to Social Work Services | 7 |
| Voluntary Housing Transfers | 6 |
| Mutual Exchanges | 5 |
| Criminal Justice Service Interventions | 4 |
| Operation Notebook Stage 3 | 2 |
| Acceptable Behaviour Contracts | 2 |
| Awaiting outcome of drug dealing conviction charge | 2 |
| Voluntary Housing Transfer and agreed reduction to Short Scottish Secure Tenancy | 2 |
| Evictions | 1 |
| Unacceptable Behaviour Notices | 1 |
| Out sourced Mediation | 1 |
| Operation Notebook Stage 2 | 0 |
| Anti Social Behaviour Orders | 0 |

| Referrals to the Anti Social Behaviour Investigator – All tenures | |
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| Closed cases | 49 Cases |
| Open cases | 5 Cases |

| Tenure Analysis | |
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| Highland Council Tenancies | 27 Cases |
| Private Landlords (Part 7) | 14 Cases |
| Owner/Occupiers | 10 Cases |
| Others | 3 Cases |

| Disposal Analysis | |
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| Highland Council Tenancies | 21 Cases Successfully Resolved and Closed |
| | 2 Cases Unresolved and Closed |
| | 4 Cases Currently Open |
| Private Landlords | 13 Cases Successfully Resolved and Closed |
| | 1 Case Unresolved and Closed |
| | 0 Currently Open |
| Owner/ Occupiers | 8 Cases Successfully Resolved and Closed |
| | 1 Case Unresolved and Closed |
| | 1 Case Currently Open |
| Others | 3 Cases Successfully Resolved and Closed (Typically RSL/Outreach Care etc.) |
| Current Antisocial Behaviour Orders | 4 |