

<b>Committee:</b> Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 26/03/2019
<b>Subject:</b> Tenancy Visits Project Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Dean Robinson, Tenancy Visits Project Manager	

### Summary

This report updates members on the progress made with the tenancy visits programme. Visits have been underway since August 2018 and the programme is on target for completion the end of March 2019. To date the tenancy inspectors have made a total of 4,464 visits or attempted visits, with 1,690 interviews conducted successfully (at 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019). This accounts for approximately 87% of the tenanted housing stock. As the project continues, most residents have welcomed the fire safety advice provided by the Tenancy Visits Team.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- note the report.

### Background

1. The Corporation has a duty to ensure fair, effective and efficient use of its housing assets. This requires it to ensure that stock is properly let and used for its intended purpose and that service delivery arrangements incorporate principles of equality and diversity that meet tenants' needs. A number of these requirements have been given added emphasis in recent years through legislation such as the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 and the Equalities Act 2010, both of which strengthened the powers and responsibilities of social housing landlords in their respective areas.
2. To help ensure these duties are carried out effectively, officers currently visit and inspect up to a third of its tenanted properties each year. Tenancy visits enable the Corporation to ensure properties are being properly occupied and maintained in accordance with tenancy conditions. The visits have also identified various housing management issues, such as changes in household information and additional or changed support needs within households. The information gathered from the visits will enable staff to get to know tenants and their specific needs better.

## **Current Position**

3. The visiting officers have completed the bulk of inspections at the Avondale Square Estate, with some remaining visits and pending appointments. All tenants were contacted and visited at least three times by 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
5. The Tenancy Inspectors commenced visits at the Golden Lane Estate on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019, with over 160 interviews completed at the time of writing (5<sup>th</sup> March 2019) and a view to finalise by 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
6. Some of the residents living on the Avondale Square Estate commented that the visiting teams' leaflets and correspondence had sometimes gone unnoticed. Following this feedback, a decision was made to change the design, colours and size of the visiting teams' documents, making them more eye-catching and bolder. The new look posters, leaflets, calling cards and letters were introduced prior to the Golden Lane Estate visits and have been successful, seemingly prompting a quicker response from tenants for appointments.
7. To ensure that as many visits as possible are completed in full by the end of the programme, a list is currently being compiled of tenants across all estates that, for various reasons, have not completed the survey. These tenants will be contacted, and appointments made for the visiting officers to return to those properties to complete surveys.
8. As of 5<sup>th</sup> March, a total of 1,934 properties have been visited and 1,690 interviews have been completed across all the estates. This accounts for approximately 87% of the tenanted housing stock.
10. Using the information gathered by the visiting officers, it was discovered that a housing applicant had been offered a two-bedroom property in error due to inaccurate information being held about their current housing needs. The applicant was, in fact, adequately housed and the offer of a larger property was withdrawn. The property was later accepted by another applicant from the housing list.
11. The visits on the Avondale Square and Golden Lane Estates have so far not uncovered any new cases of suspected hoarding. The estate staff have worked closely with the visiting officers to inform them of existing cases. Any new hoarding concerns are referred to the estate office staff for intervention.
12. The visiting team intends to begin the pilot for leaseholder visits on the Golden Lane Estate. This trial will focus on fire safety and any assistance that residents may need in an emergency and will be trialled at two blocks initially before being evaluated.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

12. The tenancy visit programme is a key objective in the Housing & Neighbourhoods division business plan and contributes to the delivery of Strategic Priority 4 - *Supporting homes and communities: Developing strong neighbourhoods and ensuring people have a decent place to live.*

## **Appendices**

- None.

## **Background Papers**

Tenancy Visits Programme, Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee,

23 July 2018

24 September 2018

27 November 2018

21 January 2019

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