

<b>Committee:</b> Housing Management and Almshouses Sub- Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 16/05/2019
<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 project. Visits have been underway since August 2018 and the programme was completed on the 29th March 2019. The tenancy inspectors visited a total of 1,934 properties and successfully completed 1,845 interviews. This accounts for approximately 95.4% of the tenanted housing stock.

This is the final routine update report that Members will receive. A full report on the project and the findings of the tenancy visit surveys will be presented to Committee in July 2019.

### 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 and understands its 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 the City's 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 possible tenancy fraud, updating changes in household information and identifying any additional or changed needs within households. This also allows staff to get to know tenants and their specific needs better.

## Current Position

3. The Tenancy Visits Project has been completed, with a total of 95.4% of inspections completed across all estates. This meets the original target for the programme of 95%.
4. All tenants were contacted and visited at least three times in line with the project end date of 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
5. Those tenants who have not completed the survey have been referred to the relevant estate team for further action.
6. The Visiting Officers attempted surveys at a total of 1,934 properties and completed 1,845 interviews across all the estates. A total of 4,705 door knocks were made across all estates (tenanted properties).
7. Members will recall that a pilot of the survey would be carried out with leaseholders on Golden Lane, in order to gauge how useful it might be for the survey to be carried out with all the City's home-owners. A sample of leaseholders on the Golden Lane estate were written to, with visits set to begin in the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
8. The trial leaseholder survey focussed largely on fire safety issues and any assistance that individual residents may need in an emergency requiring evacuation. Two blocks, Hatfield House and Bowater House, were chosen for the pilot. The 50 leaseholders in these two blocks were written to with an appointment for the survey and the option to re-book at a more convenient time or date.
9. The results were:
  - 56% (28) of the leaseholders invited to take part in the survey did not attend the appointments or contact the visiting team to cancel or re-schedule the appointments
  - Six (12%) of the leaseholders invited to take part in the survey cancelled the appointment made and stated they did not want to participate in the survey
  - Sixteen leaseholders (32%) completed the survey
10. Officers believe that a different approach to surveying leaseholders may be required, given the different nature of the relationship between the City and its homeowners (when compared with tenants). Officers will consider ways of providing useful fire safety information to leaseholders and ascertaining any relevant information about support needs or vulnerabilities, outside this project.

Officers were also mindful that the funding for this project was due to finish at the end of April 2019.

11. The data gathered as part of the Tenancy Visits Project is now being analysed and officers intend to provide Members with a more detailed report on the project's findings in July 2019.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

10. 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 Project Update, Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee:

- 23 July 2018
- 24 September 2018
- 27 November 2018
- 21 January 2019
- 26 March 2019

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