

APPENDIX 1

Recommendations of Working Group: Estate Management

- Main aim of nuisance procedures should be to try and maintain tenancies rather than evict. Legal action should be taken promptly if other methods have failed.
- Mediation should be used for cases not involving serious anti-social behaviour and other action suspended whilst it is tried.
- Area Housing Officers main role should be to tackle serious nuisance and make full use of other agencies such as Mediation; Police and Environmental Health
- Cases should be graded according to severity
- There should be regular case reviews
- Use of Acceptable Behaviour contracts should be encouraged and used across all areas rather than just in a pilot area
- ASBOs should be more widely used
- Legal action for breach of tenancy agreement should be taken against tenants who repeatedly damage property, allow their gardens to become untidy, carry out car repairs etc and fail to repay recharged costs.
- Introductory tenancies should be considered by the Council as a means of ensuring new tenants conduct their tenancies properly (nuisance and rent payment)
- All current secure tenants should be consulted on the introduction as well as organisations such as EHALC, Social Services and CAB
- In order to comply with Human Rights, suspected breaches of Introductory Tenancies must be investigated as thoroughly as secure tenancies. Aim should be to try and maintain tenancies rather than evict.
- There should be reviews carried out of all tenancies prior to the 12 month period ending
- Requests for reviews of decisions to go end an Introductory tenancy and seek possession should be heard by Head of Service or Director

Recommendations of Working Group: Tenant and Leaseholder Participation

- Tenants Groups to keep records of attendance at meetings and issues raised
- Tenant Participation is kept at current level of £25,000 and reviewed annually. Budget is used to help fund 5 main associations, cover tenant representative expenses, provide tenant representative training, fund production of the Newsletter , Calendar, and Handbook updates
- Carry out Annual survey of all tenants using the STATUS format
- Continue to produce the quarterly Newsletter but to investigate advertising as a way of covering costs. Tenants to be surveyed on format of Newsletter in next edition.
- Handbook to be reviewed in October 2002 and then twice yearly. Updates to be produced

- Training for tenant representatives to be piloted in 2002/03. Subjects to include I.T., meeting skills, and budgets. Training to be used as an incentive to increase tenant involvement.
- Another Leaseholder Forum to be held by October 2002. Leaseholder handbook to be developed with input from Leaseholders.

The Management charge element of the leasehold service charge will need to be reviewed due to the increase in services to leaseholders and the increase in numbers of leaseholders.

At present it is 20% of costs up to a ceiling of £40.

Removal of the ceiling and reduction of the charge to 17.5% is recommended.

- To work with Youth Services with aim of setting up youth Association in Willingdon Trees by Sept 2002
- To look at the feasibility of the 5 main associations producing their own newsletters
- To encourage TAs to have their own identity with logos etc.
- To reissue the Tenant Participation summary document to all tenants and leaseholders in August 2002.
- To update and reissue Tenant Compact by December 2002
- To encourage TAs to seek external funding opportunities (Lottery, Community Chest, Options Grants)
- To run a roadshow in August 2002 involving other Council Services and external agencies
- Explore feasibility of tenant representatives being included in new tenancy visits (6 weeks after tenancy start)
- Encourage TAs to carry out local surveys (e.g. for Environmental Improvements)
- To hold monthly TA Forum as a way of all TAs meeting
- To investigate setting up of TAs in other areas e.g. Archery
- To investigate tenant involvement in Scrutiny Committees

Recommendations of Working Group: Revenue Collection

General

- Rent Setting Policy put on paper.
- The rent arrears Policy be reviewed and ratified by December 2002.
- Housing Benefit/Housing Liaison worked on
- Verification framework for Housing Benefit claims be explained to customers.
- Information Technology shortfalls addressed.
- Survey customers on revenue collection service
- Increase public awareness of revenue collection services.

- Challenge misconceptions about the service
- Make use of the roadshow to address this.
- Introductory Tenancies should be put to wide scale consultation
- Re establish corporate debt recovery protocols.
- . Regular training for staff
- Tenant reps be offered training.
- Pilot further estate based surgeries, according to need.
- Promote existing payment methods and be open to more.
- Investigate weekly balancing on accounts.
- Continue to support staff during this review.
- Information on arrears to be presented in an easier to understand format.
- Leaseholder service charge recovery, be subject to its own review.
- **Pre tenancy**
- Promote prevention rather than cure approach
- **Existing Tenancy**
- Review existing arrears procedures and stationery by December 2002.
- Review procedure and practice for collecting former tenancy arrears by December 2002.
- Review format of quarterly rent statement, with examples for discussion by September 2002.
- Carry out consultation on incentive/reward scheme.
- Within housing, refer customers to arrears team, once the matter they contacted the Council about has been dealt with.
- Once services relocated to 1 Grove Road expand this to any contact made at that location.
- Changes in service availability are well publicised.
- Promote the role of the Welfare Benefits Officer
- Review Performance Management systems for the arrears team.