

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL: 19 JANUARY 2016

INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES UPDATE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is now nearly 2 years since NFDC implemented Introductory Tenancies. This report is to update the Panel on how effective Introductory Tenancies have been since the first update in January 2015.
- 1.2 An Introductory Tenancy is a “probationary” tenancy which is in place for 1 year, with the possibility of a further 6-month extension for cases where Officers feel there may be further monitoring required in terms of behaviour or rent arrears.
- 1.3 Introductory Tenancies allow Officers to ensure a more robust management of the tenancy and the individual by assisting, supporting and educating new tenants in maintaining a tenancy. On successful completion of an Introductory Tenancy, the tenancy automatically becomes a fixed-term tenancy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Introductory Tenancies were introduced to NFDC on 1st April 2014. Unlike Secure and Non Secure tenancies which are governed under The Housing Act 1985, Introductory Tenancies are governed under The Housing Act 1996 and have no security of tenure. They do however; have the right to appeal the service of a Notice of Possession Proceedings.
- 2.2 Introductory Tenancies are offered to all new tenants who are housed through the Housing waiting list.
- 2.3 Introductory tenancies are designed to help in the fight against anti-social behaviour by making it easier for local authority landlords to evict tenants who persistently engage in such activity, before they achieve security of tenure. They are also used to deal with other tenancy agreement breaches such as rent arrears.

3. STATISTICS

- 3.1 Introductory Tenancies are managed by the Neighbourhood & Tenancy Management Officers (NATMO's) and Rent & Arrears Recovery Officers (RARO's). Both services have procedures which determine the sequencing of visits, contact and enforcement action. The procedures vary slightly for each service however they are streamlined to complement each service to ensure a fair split of the workload and good communication between services.
- 3.2. There are currently **141** Introductory Tenancies in place.
 - Of 141 IT's there are 46 in rent arrears.
 - The total value of the rent arrears = £7918.04
 - 2 Notices of Possession Proceedings have been served for arrears.
 - The Rent team has undertaken 127 visits to Introductory Tenants.

3.4 The Neighbourhood & Tenancy Management Team have:

- 2 current problematic IT cases.
- Served 1 Notice of Possession Proceedings
- Extended 1 Introductory Tenancy and are currently in the process of extending a second.
- Had 1 Appeal Hearing regarding service of the Notice of Extension. The appeal was upheld in favour of NFDC. A Tenant Representative sat on the appeal hearing at the request of the aggrieved tenant.
- 1 Introductory Tenancy will be going to court imminently.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Whilst it is certainly clear that the robust management appears to be successful, both the Rent & Neighbourhood Officers state how time-consuming it is managing these tenancies as a more dedicated and intense management is required.

4.2 The statistics indicate that Introductory Tenancies are proving successful and that robust management is having a positive impact.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no additional financial implications at this stage; however, it is expected that when Universal Credit is fully implemented in the District the additional visits and workload associated with the IT process may require additional staffing to ensure the continued success of this tenure. A business case will be prepared and submitted for consideration in due course.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Crime and Disorder implications as a result of this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

8.1 There are no specific Equality and Diversity implications as all policy and procedures relating to Introductory Tenancies are governed under corporate requirements.

9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

9.1 I am pleased to see the positive results of this tenure and I am aware of the resource that goes in to make them successful. I am grateful to all Officers who manage these tenancies so well.

10. TENANTS' COMMENTS

10.1 The tenants are very happy with the management of Introductory Tenancies and fully support the robust process.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 That the Panel note the progress and receive a further update in 12 months.

For further information please contact:

Background Information:

Pauline Lewis
Landlord Services Manager
Tel No: 023 8028 5222
E-mail: pauline.lewis@nfdc.gov.uk

None

Glynne Miles
Head of Housing and Customer Services
Tel: 023 8028 5588
E-mail: glynne.miles@nfdc.gov.uk