

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TENANCY AGREEMENT</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND INVESTMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>YVONNE FOX – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee with an update on the request by Members to introduce a shortened tenancy agreement that is easier for tenants to understand and refer to.

## **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 The proposed text for the shortened tenancy agreement is attached at Appendix 1
- 2.2 The main Tenancy Agreement is 44 pages long. The key points have been included in the shortened version. It is proposed that this version is available on the website and will be easier to translate in to other languages or make available in large print.

The sign up procedures for new tenants will be considered and new arrangements, to ensure that new tenants are fully aware of their obligations as tenants and that they have the support and guidance to help them sustain their tenancies, are established.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Housing Appeals Panel and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee have raised concerns regarding tenancy breakdown and the increasing numbers of people who attended hearings of the appeals panel and were unaware of their obligations as tenants.

Members raised concerns that the main Tenancy Agreement is too long (44 pages) and that some tenants may find it difficult to understand. Members therefore requested that a shortened version is introduced that is easier for tenants to understand and refer to.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 As Members are aware, the Tenancy Agreement is a legal document that is prescribed in Law. This means that any agreement has to contain certain information.

What our current Tenancy Agreement does is combine the legal requirements of the document and expands this to provide further guidance and interpretation.

Although the Agreement document is comprehensive, the additional, and sometimes complicated information has resulted in the Agreement being too long and not always easy to understand.

- 4.2 In recent years, Tenancy Services has focussed on rent collection and anti-social behaviour. The team now has comprehensive practices and procedures established and are maximising income collection and addressing ASB swiftly and successfully.

Unfortunately, some tenants find it difficult to maintain a tenancy and, unless they engage with us, their tenancy is likely to fail. There are many reasons why a person may find it difficult to sustain a tenancy but going forward, we want to minimise the number of preventable tenancy failures. Several measures are currently being trialled and these will form the basis of our tenancy sustainment strategy.

## **5. Organisational Impacts**

### **5.1 Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

No impact.

### **5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

No impact.

## **6. Risk Implications**

- 6.1 (i) No risks.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the proposed shortened tenancy agreement and a further report on customer feedback on its use will be considered by Members after a 6 month trial of its use.
- 7.2 Members will receive a further update on the Tenancy Sustainment strategy in the New Year.

**Is this a key decision?** Yes/No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** Yes/No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** Yes/No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** 1

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Gareth Griffiths, Housing Quality and Performance  
Team Leader  
Telephone (01522) 873448