

SUBJECT:	TENANCY SUSTAINMENT UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	KEELEY JOHNSON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on the current position with tenancy sustainment.

2. Background

2.1 Tenancy sustainment continues to be a key priority within the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI), and we are working towards the implementation of the Sustainment Team on 1 April 2022. This is later than anticipated, due to delays with recruitment during Covid-19 and then securing a job evaluation panel due to lack of Union representation.

2.2 Three offers of employment on two-year contracts have been made to two external and one internal individual with a wealth of experience across the support and voluntary sector.

2.3 The initial plan is for a robust process to be put in place for pre-tenancy work, with a focus on vulnerable applicants. The aim will be to ensure that tenants are set up to thrive in their tenancy with assistance with welfare benefits forms, signposting to necessary support and assistance with furniture through local charities. The team will be an advocacy and signposting service for the vulnerable tenants who require help with support in times of crisis.

2.4 As soon as the pre-tenancy work has been established, the team will start to take referrals for further assistance through the lifetime of tenancies.

3. Current Position

3.1 Tenancy have succeeded in maintaining the rental income stream with 100.34% in year rent collection as of the end of January. The eviction hiatus was lifted in October 2021, and we have worked hard to ensure there has not been a significant increase in evictions, with only 6 being carried out since the ban was lifted.

3.2 The Eviction Prevention Panel meets to discuss any potential eviction warrant to ensure that all avenues have been exhausted before a tenant is evicted. This panel includes Housing Solutions, Revenues and Benefits, Legal, Area Housing Managers and the Tenancy Services Manager.

3.3 All enforcement action must be supported by a full Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment in line with the Equality Act 2010 and these are required by the courts to ensure consideration has been given for protected characteristics and vulnerabilities and are carried out by the Housing Officer.

3.4 We do still proceed with eviction where appropriate, but we ensure that all the necessary actions are taken before doing so to ensure a One Council approach.

3.5

- Current tenancies – 7,585
- Annual rent debit - £28,619,622.50

- % in receipt of HB (partial and full) – 38.22%
- No. affected by under-occupancy charge - 275
- Live UC cases – 2,417 (avg. balance - £285.00)
- Current arrears as of end of Jan - £1,100,730.90
- Current rent as % of debit – 3.85%
- Current in year collection – 100.34% excl. arrears/credits, 97.11% including arrears/credits
- Number of evictions 2021/22 - 6

4. Finance

- 4.1 The MTFs provides budget provision for the three additional posts of £107,340, which has been funded from the HRA Invest to Save Reserve. Funding for the second year will also be made available through HRA earmarked reserves.

5. Legal implications (including procurement rules)

- 5.1 No further considerations at present.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

- 6.2 The Project is in accordance with the equality duty impact assessments required from local government.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That members note the current position relating to Tenancy Sustainment.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

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

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None

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