

Tenants View Forum Note - Tuesday 28th January 2020 at 11am Summary Note

1.0 Present:

L Lawrence
L Billet

Angela Laley, Project and Communications Co-ordinator, Forth Housing
Nicola Stobie, Tenant Services Manager, Forth Housing

2.0 Apologies:

G Cairns, M Duncan, L Jones, D Gemmell, M Welsh, S Dove, L Lavery and H Mckendrick

3.0 Welcome and Introductions - A Laley carried out introductions and welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda which was an update on performance, Budget/Rent Setting an update on the Allocations Policy. The group confirmed that they were happy with an informal format with questions being asked during the presentation. It was confirmed that due to the snow there had been a number of apologies but it was decided to proceed with the meeting.

4.0 Performance Update

5.0 Forth's Performance- N Scobie carried out a power point presentation on the results of the key areas of performance (a hard copy of the presentation is available upon request). For each section the 2018/19 performance was noted and then it was compared to the results for 2019/20 and the Scottish average. Categories such as: average time for emergency repair, average time for non-emergency repair, repairs completed first time, anti-social behaviour resolved in timescale and tenancies sustained for more than a year – were discussed. A key of faces was given to denote performance: a smiley face was given for exceeding the target. By the end of this section it was shown that Forth had received 6 smiley faces, 0 middle faces and 2 sad faces which gave Forth an overall pass. So 6 passes overall, with 2 areas to work on.

6.0 N Stobie confirmed the following and the group discussed the results:

1/Avg Time for Emergency Repairs

- **2018/19 performance** **2.0hrs**
- **2018/19 target** **4.0hrs**
- **2019/20 performance** **2.0hrs**

3/Repairs Completed Right First Time

- **2018/19 performance** **97.8%**
- **2018/19 target** **95.0%**

- **2019/20 performance 98.1%**

4/Anti-social behaviour resolved in timescale

- **2018/19 performance 88%**
- **2018/19 target 100%**
- **2019/20 performance 100%**

5/Tenancies Sustained for 1 Year+

- **2018/19 performance 98%**
- **2018/19 target >85%**
- **2019/20 performance 94%**

6/Gross Rent Arrears

- **2018/19 performance 3.0%**
- **2019/20 target 2.6%**
- **2019/20 performance 2.9%**

7/Rent Lost Through Empty Homes

- **2018/19 performance 0.01%**
- **2018/19 target <0.05%**
- **2019/20 performance 0.03%**

8/Average Time to Relet Homes

- **2018/19 performance 2.6 days**
- **2018/19 target 3.0 days**
- **2018/19 performance 3.9 days**

7.0 Budget/ Rent Setting

The timescales were outlined:

- Start in October 2019
- Draft to Committee 09/12/19
- Tenant consultation 'til 13/1/20
- Final budget to Committee 27/1/20
- Notify rent to tenants by 28/2/20
- New budget takes effect 1/4/20

The Basic Principles were discussed:

- Possible changes to core staffing
- No areas of major new spend
- No new homes in 20/21
- Capital improvement programme
- Keep increase in line with inflation

L Lawrence asked the rent increase agreed and N Stobie confirmed that this was 2.1%.

7.0 Allocations Policy Under Review

N Stobie confirmed that the existing policy had gone to Committee for review yesterday and had been approved. Background:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a number of changes in relation to the allocation of social housing in Scotland.
- We had consulted with our tenants, Registered Tenants Organisation and applicants on proposed changes to the policy.
- We had consulted with tenants and applicants via a questionnaire issued out with the tenant newsletter, we had set up an online survey and held drop in sessions at the office.

Consultation questions

- Reasonable Preference
- Incentives to down-size
- Home ownership
- Reasonable offers

L Lawrence asked if overcrowding included. N Scobie confirmed it was and this was discussed in more detail.

Allocations Review Summary

N Scobie confirmed:

Section 3 – Legal and good practice framework

Change from 4 to 3 Reasonable Preference groups. We consulted tenants and applicants and the majority stated that there should not be any other reasonable preference groups.

Reasonable Preference to be given to applicants with an “unmet housing need” “Unmet housing need” defined in the policy as; if an individual has a need which is not capable of being met by their current housing circumstances.

Owner occupiers: We consulted with tenants and applicants and the majority stated that home ownership should be taken into account when allocating housing.

Section 4 – Allocation System

Change from 7 groups to 5 groups

Group 1 – Referrals of applicants from Stirling Council

Group 2 – Contains the 3 Reasonable Preference Groups

- A – People affected by homelessness/threatened with homelessness
- B – Unsatisfactory housing conditions – no legal definition so we defined as:
 1. Overcrowding
 2. Below Tolerable Standard
 3. Harassment/abuse
 4. Adapted/accessible home
- C – Under-occupancy

Group 3 – General

Under-occupancy – we consulted with tenants and applicants on whether we should offer incentives to tenants to down size. The majority said that we should. We have incorporated a paragraph advising that we may offer incentives in exceptional circumstances, if it will help make best use of our housing stock.

Making offers – amended to make two reasonable offers before considering suspension. We consulted on reducing the number of offers that we make from 3 to 2. The response was identical for both those that thought that the amount of offers should be reduced and those that didn't. We are proposing to reduce the number of offers to 2 to make the best use of our housing stock.

Exceptional circumstances – paragraph added in, as per good practice highlighted by the legislation

Section 7 - Suspensions

We have added in and defined examples of where we may suspend applications due to conduct

Assignment and Succession Policy

Assignment - The changes relate to the new requirement for a tenant and the person that they wish to assign the tenancy to having lived in the property as their only or principle home during the previous 12 months, and we have received written notification of this.

Succession - The changes relate to the new requirement for the person that is looking to succeed to the tenancy having lived in the property as their only or principle home during the previous 12 months, and we have received written notification of this.

Sub-letting and Lodgers Policy

Sub-letting - The changes relate to the new requirement for a tenant to have lived in the property as their only or principle home during the previous 12 months

Assurance Statement – A Laley confirmed that this was now available on our website under Downloads/ Governance Docs/Corporate Policies.

9.0 Director Update –

A Laley confirmed that Grahame was off sick and would provide an update for the next meeting.

10.0 Any Other Business

No other business.

11.0 Next Meeting - The next meeting will take place Tues 14/7/20 at 11am. The group confirmed that they were happy with the format of the Director providing an update on performance and relevant staff highlighting changes to policies. L Lawrence confirmed that she had an interest in eco- friendly policies and money that can be saved, as well as reducing carbon, by using appropriate light bulbs, boilers etc. It was confirmed that our Maintenance Officer could discuss at next meeting what Forth is doing to be environmentally friendly.