

**UPDATE REPORT FROM THE HOUSING IMPROVEMENT TEAM ON
NEIGHBOUR NUISANCE AND THE TENANCY AGREEMENT**

Accountable Officer and author: Derek Nickless Head of Neighbourhood Services (Housing
- MK 253498

1. Purpose

1.1 To report back to Committee on matters relating to introductory tenancies

2. Summary

1.1 The Housing Improvement Team (HIT) looking into neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour has recently considered the issues of introductory tenancies as one of the means of minimising nuisance. Members of the HIT are broadly in favour of implementing such a scheme alongside a series of other recommendations once the team has completed its work.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (a) note that the Housing Improvement Team broadly supports the implementation of introductory tenancies alongside a series of other measures that need to be incorporated into a strategy for tackling neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.
- (b) note that a more detailed evaluation of the legal requirements, consultation, training and procedure notes will be considered by the Housing Improvement Team at a future meeting and incorporated into the final recommendations of the team.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 The Housing Committee established this team in June 1999. It has met four times and minutes of the meetings have been reported to subsequent committees. The team is made up of Councillors, tenant representatives, officers at varying levels and representatives from a local housing association, the Community Mediation Service and Thames Valley Police. Additional representatives such as Victim Support and Children's Services will be invited to attend when dealing with specific topics.
- 4.2 The Housing Committee on the 1 February 2000 received an update report highlighting some urgent actions. Following a Members Item, there was also a debate regarding introductory tenancies and the Committee resolved to call for a report back to its next meeting.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 At the meeting of the HIT on the 9 February 2000 detailed consideration was given to the merits and practical considerations of an introductory tenancy scheme aimed at giving the Council more opportunities to deal with breaches of the Council's tenancy agreement amongst new tenants. It was reported that in the region of one-quarter of local authorities operate an introductory tenancy scheme, that approximately half have not taken up such an option and that the remaining quarter are considering the position.
- 5.2 The HIT were reminded of the presentation given to the Area and Boroughwide Housing Boards describing Manchester's experiences and perceived success of introductory tenancies as part of their wider strategy on neighbour nuisance.
- 5.3 Recent examples of detailed documentation and an attempt at evaluation of such schemes had been requested from the Chartered Institute of Housing, but had not been received in time for the meeting. Nevertheless, there was a consensus amongst team members that the implementation of such a scheme would be a positive contribution to the Council's efforts in tackling these problems. They also agreed that more detailed proposals would need to be incorporated into the final recommendations of the team once the full range of issues had been covered.
- 5.4 Whilst it would be possible to commence the implementation of introductory tenancies relatively soon, the team recognised that there may be other proposals that would require consultation, information and changes in procedures and that it would make good sense to implement these at the same time rather than on a piece-meal basis.

6. **Implications**

- 6.1 Environmental
- None.

6.2 Equalities

Complex equalities issues are raised when considering the ultimate sanctions against perpetrators of neighbour nuisance – in particular social inclusion and mental health matters are particularly difficult to deal with.

6.3 Financial

None.

6.4 Legal

The implementation of a new-style tenancy agreement for future tenants would need to be thoroughly checked by the Council's legal officers. Potentially the possession process through the Courts in such instances could be more simplified.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

None.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The Housing Improvement Team is making good progress in considering the value of introductory tenancies within a wider strategy to deal with neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Background Papers: None