

Appendix 3 – Protocol for the operation of the new tenancy sustainment function in relation to issues in any former designated elderly stock

A new Tenancy Sustainment function is to be established within the new Accommodation and Sustainment Team within Housing Needs. Previously this team only dealt with support and tenancy sustainment issues with regard to Council temporary accommodation. The 'Council 2012' restructure proposes to provide additional staff resources into this team, from the old Estate Management/ Tenancy Services function, to undertake more focused tenancy sustainment work in relation to permanent council tenancies.

There is currently one Tenancy Sustainment Officer employed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It is proposed that the job description for this role is revised, and that a total of 4.5 FTE new Tenancy Sustainment Officer are posts created.

Generally, it is envisaged that these officers will undertake a mixture of pro-active and reactive work, in order to ensure that tenants are appropriately supported in order for them to be able to sustain their tenancy. This will include the following functions:

- To receive referrals from other teams, including Allocations, Tenancy Advisors, Rents, Voids, and CANAcT in order to provide more intensive housing management to help a tenant (or potential tenant) sustain a tenancy
- To identify the risk factors that could give rise to a tenancy failing, and to undertake intensive housing management to limit this, including referrals and sign-posting to other teams and agencies
- To give advice and assistance at the start of tenancies to those new tenants that are considered to require it
- To monitor and review the support packages that are in place for all Council tenants, and to link-in with various meetings to co-ordinate appropriate support, including the 'Tenants at Risk' and FAROH meetings
- To identify tenants that require support, or additional support, and to make referrals to other statutory and voluntary agencies in order to progress this
- To convene multi-agency meetings, as required, in order to work jointly with other teams and agencies to best manage a case and ensure the most appropriate support is provided to the tenant to help them sustain a tenancy
- To negotiate alternative housing solutions, if appropriate, for tenants that are unlikely to continue to sustain a permanent Council tenancy, including negotiating a surrender of the tenancy and referring a case to the ECP with a recommendation that a 'commitment to re-house' be given – should, for example, the tenant require a prolonged period of rehabilitation or respite care away from their home
- To improve the social inclusion of tenants through undertaking targeted work with households and make referrals to debt, money management and welfare advice services. To increase tenants access to education, employment and training, through appropriate sign-posting and referrals
- To provide an on-site (office hours) presence at Riverside Court, and to carry a specific caseload of any resident at Riverside Court that requires support. To help progress the moving-on of tenants at Riverside Court that no longer require support
- To work jointly with other teams, in particular, Tenant Advisors, CANAcT, and Rent Teams, in order to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services to vulnerable tenants
- To ensure that any possible cases that could result in homelessness are identified to the Housing Options team at the earliest available opportunity

In relation to blocks and schemes that were formerly designated elderly, but which have since been de-designated (effectively reducing the minimum eligible age for applicants from either 40 or 55 years of age to 18 years), the Tenancy Sustainment Officers will be especially mindful that there may be 'lifestyle' differences between existing tenants and any 'younger' new tenants moving in. The team will be alert to intervene at the earliest opportunity to address any such issues identified, and to try and ensure the on-going success of this 'integrated living'. This will be through a range of measures, including the following:

- To have one officer with a specific 'specialist area' of elderly accommodation, to act as a lead and to co-ordinate actions in respect of sheltered and designated schemes (including former designated schemes)
- To visit any new tenants (under 30 years of age) that move into former designated schemes to stress the importance of respecting neighbours and complying with tenancy agreements, etc
- To act robustly with respect to any neighbour complaints with regard to tenancy issues in former designated schemes, including to promptly visit all tenants concerned; and liaise with CANAcT officers accordingly; or to help mediate a successful resolution to the issue, as appropriate
- To lead with respect to completing any ECP referrals to support the transfers of any existing tenants (aged 70 and over) that wish to move from former designated schemes into designated or sheltered housing schemes, and to pro-actively assist with progressing a transfer, including assisting with bidding through the CBL system
- To link in with local community initiatives and other agencies, to try to maximise the social cohesion within sheltered, designated elderly and former designated schemes