

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services**

**Social Justice Committee: 13 September 2006**

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**Subject: Performance Improvement Actions - Re-let Times**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report informs the Committee of the actions being taken to improve re-let times for our housing stock.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** At a meeting of the Social Justice Committee on 14 June 2006, a report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the levels of performance of areas within the housing service.
- 2.2** The Committee agreed that the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services be requested to prepare a further report for consideration at the meeting of the Social Justice Committee to be held on 13 September 2006 to provide information on improving performance for response times for housing repairs and re-let times for housing stock.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** There exists a large number of void properties which have little or no demand, many of which have been vacant for a number of years. A number of measures have already been put in place to improve performance in this area.
- 3.2** A void management report which outlined performance improvement plans was approved by the Social Justice Committee in October 2005. An action plan has been generated from this report with associated timescales and targets wherein actions include setting SMART targets for each stage in the void process, the introduction of a re-let standard, under-occupation of properties, the introduction of estate based audits to improve the condition of our estates and marketing of our difficult to let properties.
- 3.3** The department is at the advanced stages of completion of a Best Value Review of Tenancy Services which includes the voids and lettings process and work is ongoing to improve the management reports from our IT system. It is planned to implement a DIP & Workflow system for the voids and lettings process during 2006/2007 and we have produced process maps to be incorporated into this system.

- 3.4** Monitoring regimes have been set up for each stage in the void process and action is being taken to address areas of concern. As a result of this, monthly meetings are now held with Homeless staff to improve the process and the time taken in making homeless decisions which impacts on the overall turnaround time. Meetings have been held with our gas contractor to review the process for gas works in void properties and weekly meetings take place with allocations, homeless and repairs and maintenance section to discuss the progress on voids.
- 3.5** Staff training has also taken place in relation to policies and procedures, Saffron system and key monitoring. Refresher training has been programmed for existing staff during the coming year. As a result of the ongoing Best Value Review, the void process is being benchmarked and good practice guidelines are being reviewed to ensure improved service provision.
- 3.6** The implementation of the action plan from the void management report submitted to Social Justice Committee on 12 October 2005 has resulted in a reduction in the number of voids. We have been successful in letting properties which had been long term voids. Bringing such voids back into the letting stream reduces the number of voids and the rent lost due to voids, however this has an adverse effect on re-let times.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** The improvement in our void performance has resulted in rent lost due to voids reducing from 7.4% in 2004/2005 to 6.4% in 2005/2006. The first quarter of 2006/2007 is showing a further reduction to 5.8%.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1** There are a number of actions being taken to improve our re-let times and our overall void performance. Our processes are continually under review to ensure sustained improvement. As we are successful in bringing long term voids back into the letting stream, there is an adverse effect on the re-let times.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 The Committee is invited to note the report and the actions being taken to improve re-let times for our housing stock.**

**David McMillan**  
**Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services**  
**Date: 29 August 2006**

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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Appendix:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Minutes of Social Justice Committee 14 June 2006  Void Management Report to Social Justice Committee 12 October 2005  Performance Report to Social Justice Committee 14 June 2006
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