

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND CONSULTATION ON HOUSING BENEFIT SANCTIONS

Report of the Director of Derby Homes

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the revised Anti Social Behaviour Policy, attached at Appendix 1, and details the results to date of consultation on Housing Benefit sanctions, shown at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 The Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group response to the Housing Benefit sanctions is attached at Appendix 3.
- 1.3 Committee is asked to consider Derby Homes' response to the proposals, which needs to be made to Government by 12 August 2003.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Committee is asked:
 - i. to recommend to the Board the revised Anti Social Behaviour Policy, at Appendix 1
 - ii. to note the response from tenants and Community Panels, shown at Appendix 2
 - iii. to note the views of the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group, shown at Appendix 3
 - iv. to consider the Derby Homes response to the Housing Benefit sanctions proposal
 - v. that the Director and Chair of the Board be authorised to respond on behalf of Derby Homes by 12 August 2003.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Anti Social Behaviour Bill proposes that local housing authorities must produce and publish their policies and procedures in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 3.2 The Government believes that the reduction or removal of entitlements to Housing Benefit will encourage people to improve their behaviour and

accept their social responsibilities.

- 3.3 The results to date of consultation with tenants via Derby Homes News and Community Panels are shown at Appendix 2. Clearly there is a majority in favour but it must be said some of the 'in favour' replies expressed fairly extreme views. Those who voted against the proposal were concerned about the increased debt falling on other tenants.
- 3.4 The Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group (which is a national group of Registered Social Landlords and local authorities influential in the areas of ASB) are totally opposed to the Housing Benefit proposals for the reasons given in Appendix 3.
- 3.5 This issue was discussed at City Housing Consultation Group Sub on 15 July 2003 and the following reservations were expressed:
- if tenants are persistently involved in ASB, would this proposal be a deterrent?
 - Income Support deductions, rather than Housing Benefit deductions were suggested
 - if this proposal is successful it should be used as a last resort and the Housing Benefit forms should state it is an option as a deterrent factor
 - counselling and support should be available for the victims of ASB, as well as support for the perpetrator to try and get him/her to change their ways.
- 3.6 If Committee wishes to recommend the Housing Benefit proposals then it is recommended that Option 2 where the local authority determines the cases on which to apply the Housing Benefit sanction, rather than Option 1 which proposes that the Courts make the decision.
- 3.7 Appendix 4 contains a copy of a report to the City Council's Policy Co - ordination meeting, for information. It should be noted that Derby Homes will make its own response.

CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

4. Consultation has taken place through Community Panels and with all tenants through Derby Homes News.

FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

5. The reduction of ASB on estates is a major objective for Derby Homes.

LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS

6. None arising directly.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7. None arising directly from this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8. None arising directly from this report.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9. ASB blights the lives of all residents.

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