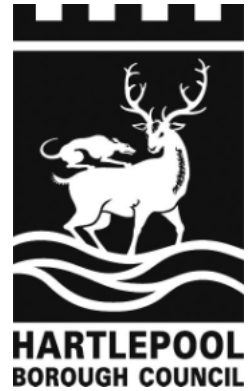


# COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE



Friday, 14 May 2010

at 10.00 am

in Committee Room C, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond responsible for Community Safety and Housing will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 2.1 Evaluation Of The Good Tenant Scheme - *Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)*
- 2.2 Employees In Tied Accommodation And The Common Allocation Policy  
*Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Regeneration And Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10 – Quarter 4  
Monitoring Report – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

**4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS**

No items

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOUSING  
PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder  
14 May 2010



**Report of: Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)**

**Subject: EVALUATION OF THE GOOD TENANT SCHEME**

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SUMMARY

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report on the findings from the evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The report outlines the background to the Good Tenant Scheme and explains how it operates. The evaluation process, key findings and conclusions are outlined. Evaluation proposals are listed. The Evaluation report is attached as an Appendix.

**3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

This is a housing and community safety issue.

**4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non key.

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Community Safety & Housing Portfolio, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

**6. DECISION REQUIRED**

The portfolio-holder is asked to note the proposals from the evaluation report outlined at paragraph 5, and agree that these proposals be considered as part of the Housing Service Delivery Option review to be undertaken in 2010/11.

**Report of:** Assistant Director, Community Safety and Protection

**Subject:** EVALUATION OF THE GOOD TENANT SCHEME

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report on the findings from the evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Good Tenant Scheme was approved by Cabinet in March 2008 and has been operational since 1st May 2008. It is a referencing service for landlords that was set up with the express aim of reducing anti-social behaviour in the private rented housing sector.

2.2 The Good Tenant Scheme operates a passport style scheme, which means that potential tenants are encouraged to apply to the scheme in advance of wanting to move and are assessed using a traffic light system.

Those issued a green card have demonstrated a history of successfully managing a tenancy.

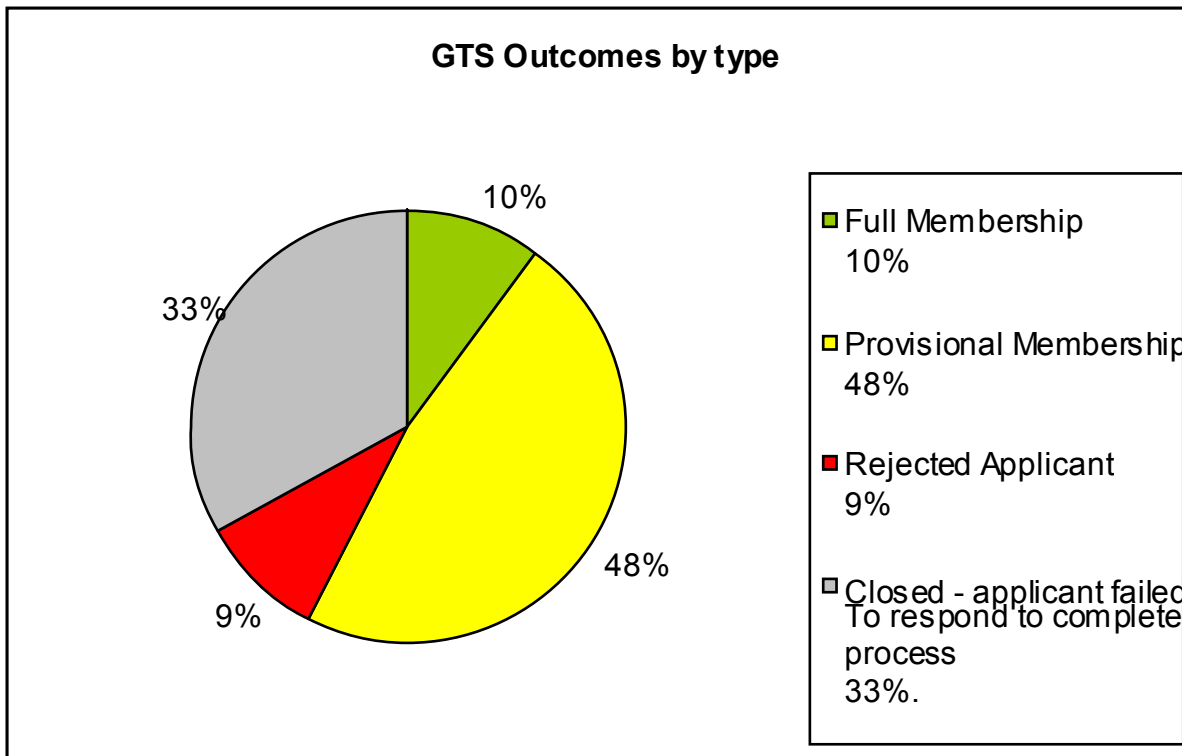
Those issued a yellow card either have no tenancy history; have a history with minor issues; or have been allocated, and are engaging with support to deal with any issues they may have.

A red card indicates that the tenant has been declined membership of the scheme, due to behaviour in previous tenancies such that the landlord was entitled to end the tenancy.

2.3 The Good Tenant Scheme was designed to run in parallel to, and complement other initiatives including the adoption of Selective Licensing of Private Landlords, and the provision of support via the Supported Housing Panel.

2.4 The Good Tenant Scheme(GTS) maintains its records on the Civica ( formerly known as Flare) database as part of the system used by the anti-social behaviour unit. Other parts of Hartlepool Borough Council use a separate Civica system. This system is due for upgrade and the intention is to merge the systems so that the council is only supporting one system.

2.5 At 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009, after eighteen months of operation, a total of 959 applications had been received, 862 had been processed and 97 were currently being processed. The results of the applications that had been processed are shown in the pie chart overleaf.



### 3. EVALUATION RESULTS

3.1 The evaluation was carried out using a variety of techniques, including +questionnaires of scheme users and landlords, focus groups, desktop analysis and discussions with other sections and referencing schemes. The evaluation report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The key findings are:

- 76% of users responding to the questionnaire found the GTS simple and easy to use.
- 25% of users are more aware of the importance of their behaviour in maintaining a good tenancy history as a result of the GTS.
- 31% of landlords using the scheme have declined prospective tenants due to information gained through the scheme whilst 30% have granted a tenancy they would not otherwise have done.
- There is a high level of confidence amongst scheme applicants and landlords that the scheme is delivering on its key aim of reducing anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector.
- There has been no impact on homelessness.

3.3 Landlords would like to see references turned around within five working days. The scheme target is ten working days. The scheme is dependent on resources being available within the Council’s Housing benefits team to verify identity and

tenancy history of the applicant, and where this has not been available this has contributed to the target being missed.

- 3.4 An attempt to establish whether or not there had been an actual reduction in anti-social behaviour cases in the private rented sector was inconclusive due to inconsistency in recording tenure data by the anti-social behaviour unit.
- 3.5 Whilst the number of applicants not completing the process has dropped from 40% in the first six months of operation, this remains high at 25% and is a concern.

#### **4 EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The Good Tenant Scheme appears to be understood and accepted by landlords, residents and other service providers. There is confidence that the scheme is well placed to make an impact in reducing anti-social behaviour.
- 4.2 The impact will be greater once Selective Licensing is more strongly established and the Housing Market Renewal Programme has dealt with the over-supply of properties which undermine attempts to restrict the housing choices of those exhibiting anti-social behaviour.
- 4.3 More work needs to be done to ensure that the scheme has a clear idea of which landlords are using the scheme and where those in receipt of green, yellow and red cards move to ensure that outcomes can be more closely monitored for future reports.
- 4.4 Residents want to be reassured that new tenants moving into their area have been through the Good Tenant Scheme
- 4.5 More work needs to be done to monitor where those with red cards move to.
- 4.6 There is scope to improve working relations between the various sections involved in providing housing services across Hartlepool.
- 4.7 There is a lack of consistency by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in recording tenure in its casework.
- 4.8 More work needs to be done to follow up applications to reduce the percentage who do not complete the process.

#### **5 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The Scheme needs to find ways of streamlining processes to become more efficient. Ideas to pursue to achieve this are as follows:-
  - 1) Direct Access to the I-Clipse scanning system in Housing Benefits – this would cut down on staff time in Housing benefit and delays in awaiting their responses, and thus improve both initial assessment times and reviews. This has now been agreed in principle and as an interim measure, access

to the system has been arranged within the Civic centre for a member of the anti-social behaviour administration team.

- 2) Once the Civica (formerly Flare) system upgrade has been completed, pursue the use of Hartlepool Connect in initiating applications.
- 3) Follow up of applications to reduce the attrition rate will bring down the average cost per completed reference. This could be achieved though engaging Anti-social Behaviour officers, Housing Advice Officers in the process.
- 4) Changes to the review criteria so that they are carried out at key events, such as moving to a new address, or engaging with support.

## 5.2 Assessing Impact

- 1) The scheme needs to find a consistent way to monitor where applicants live at the time of application.
- 2) More needs to be done to discover and disseminate information relating to relocations of those rejected by the GTS scheme and to link them to support wherever possible.
- 3) Ways need to be found to reassure residents that the scheme is being used in their area.
- 4) The Anti-social behaviour unit needs to develop consistency in recording tenure details in relation to cases to enable impact to be assessed.

## 5.3 Clarifying roles

- 1) Opportunities for merging the scheme with other elements of the housing service may help to reduce confusion on the part of the public and some landlords regarding the respective roles of various parts of the council.
- 2) Consideration be given to the creation of a landlord and tenant section which would link the Accreditation Scheme, the Selective Licensing Scheme, the Supported Housing Panel and the Good Tenant Scheme. This will be explored as part of the Service Delivery Option review which is underway as part of the Business Transformation process.

# 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The portfolio-holder is asked to note the proposals from the evaluation report outlined at paragraph 5 above, and agree that these proposals be considered as part of the Housing Service Delivery Option review to be undertaken in 2010/11.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Evaluation Report.



## **Evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme**

### **Report of findings following first eighteen months operation of the Good Tenant Scheme in Hartlepool**

Sally Forth  
Social Behaviour & Housing Manager  
Hartlepool Borough Council

March 2010



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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Good Tenant Scheme has been operational since 1st May 2008.

It is a referencing service for landlords that was set up with the express aim of reducing anti-social behaviour in the private rented housing sector. The success of the scheme was to be monitored by the number of cases of anti-social behaviour in that sector and the movement of applicants through a traffic light system indicating whether an applicant is likely to be a good tenant ( green), has no tenancy history or has a history of minor issues ( yellow ) or is unlikely to be a good tenant ( red )

The scheme was designed to run in parallel to, and complement other initiatives including the adoption of Selective Licensing of Private Landlords, and the provision of support through the Supported Housing Panel up to and including the highest level of support for disruptive families through the Family Intervention Project (FIP), all of which aim to challenge and ultimately change unacceptable behaviour as it relates to the management of tenancies..

The evaluation found that whilst there is confidence amongst users of the scheme and landlords alike that the scheme will reduce anti-social behaviour, to date there is little hard evidence of a reduction in anti-social behaviour that can be attributed to the Good Tenant Scheme.

The Evaluation comes at a time when Hartlepool Borough Council is undergoing Business Transformation, which is a fundamental review of the structure and operation of the organisation to review costs. The scheme has struggled with backlogs of work; given the current climate to simply allocate more resources is not an option thus the scheme needs to streamline its operation.

## **2. Introduction**

The Good Tenant Scheme ( GTS ) was set up following concerns that not enough was being done to counter anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector. This concern was reflected in the creation of the Family Support Panel by the New Deal for Communities in 2004 and in the Private Sector Housing Project which had resulted in the creation of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme in 2002.

The scheme was to link with the accreditation scheme, the provision of support and the selective licensing scheme which was under consideration at the time.

The Cabinet Meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008 approved the launch of a passport style of scheme. The overall aim of the scheme is to reduce anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector by impressing upon anti social tenants that they could no longer expect to easily find re-housing if they lost their tenancy, and thus encourage them to behave in a more acceptable manner. A major tool to achieve this aim is the ability to refer applicants willing to engage to appropriate support.

Concern was expressed at this stage that the Supported Housing Panel which was relatively new could be overwhelmed with the volume of referrals.

The evaluation seeks to establish what evidence there is to date that it is achieving its main aim, and whether there are any negative implications, such as an increase in homelessness or delays in achieving lets.

### **3 Context**

#### *3.1 Hartlepool's private rented sector*

The 2001 census indicated that the private rented sector in Hartlepool comprises some 2774 properties, or 7.4% of the housing stock. It also had 41.25% of its stock comprised terraced houses, some 50% higher than the national average. This coupled with the fact that property prices in 2005 were some 39% lower than the regional average meant that the properties were ripe for acquisition by speculative purchasers, and a resulting increase in out of town landlords.

#### *3.2 Hartlepool Housing Strategy.*

The strategy has three main aims

1. Addressing the housing regeneration challenge and dealing with issues of housing market imbalance and problems caused by low and changing demand for housing.
2. Meeting and surpassing the national targets for decent Homes Standards, and
3. Ensuring the housing and support needs of the most vulnerable in our town are met.

The following actions, to which the GTS is linked, support these aims:-

- Implement Selective licensing in areas with low demand or antisocial behaviour
- Encourage joint working between the Anti-social behaviour unit, and housing providers.
- Enable residents to live safely in, or return to, their own homes where they wish to.
- Facilitate implementation of the RESPECT AGENDA, particularly with regard to support to families in crisis.

#### *3.3 The Hartlepool Homelessness Strategy .*

This was produced in 2003 and reviewed in 2006. This strategy aims to end homelessness within Hartlepool for all, not just for those for whom HBC has a statutory responsibility, and to ensure all residents have access to a safe and secure home. Since the Good tenants Scheme started the Housing Options Centre has opened and the Choice Based Lettings scheme commenced.

#### *3.4 Housing Market Renewal Scheme*

The Hartlepool Housing Strategy recognised the over- supply of smaller terraced properties some years ago and is working in partnership with Housing Hartlepool to reduce the number of such properties and create a more balanced housing market which will reflect the needs and aspirations of Hartlepool residents . Until the issue of over-supply is addressed, landlords of such smaller terraced properties, with a need to achieve a return of their investment, are likely to be less selective in their choice of tenant. This creates a challenge for the Anti social behaviour Unit in general and the GTS in particular.

### *.3.5 The development of the Anti-social Behaviour Unit*

A joint anti-social behaviour unit was set up in 2004 between the police and local authority. By the end of July 2006, the Anti-social Behaviour Unit had obtained 13 Anti-social Behaviour Orders and there was concern voiced, by the local MP amongst others, that the unit was not dealing with cases in a sufficiently robust manner.

The approach had been to work with landlords to evict those causing anti-social behaviour. All too often the same people were re-housed nearby and the vacated property was occupied by yet another anti-social household. Since that time additional resources were made available so that the unit became able to employ two new case officers, who commenced work in July 2007. The number of active ASBOs and CRASBOs rose to 34 in 2007 and has remained more or less constant since that time.

### *3.6 TIES*

A fore runner of the GTS scheme, known as TIES (Tenant Information Exchange Scheme) was established by the Anti-social Behaviour unit in 2006 whilst the creation of a referencing scheme for the full town was under consideration. This scheme was designed to quickly address criticism that certain streets were experiencing an undue amount of anti-social behaviour. It was based on the premise that landlords were not doing enough to take references for their tenants, and the belief that referencing would have led to some of the more problematic tenancies not being granted. TIES dealt only with the records held by the Anti Social Behaviour Unit and did not therefore include any information on criminal or past tenancy management.

It was recognised that this scheme would not do anything to address existing problems of anti-social behaviour, nor would the scheme link to support to help achieve behavioural change, as the resource was not available to do this. It was however a stop gap means of addressing residents' concerns which was possible using existing resources.

The scheme operated from January 2007 until September 2008, and the Anti-social behaviour unit received 422 requests for references in this time. The Scheme was popular with both residents and landlords and those streets affected saw a reduction in anti-social behaviour as a result. Indeed some landlords were resistant to the move from TIES to the GTS as whilst the GTS gives a more comprehensive picture, it does take longer and depends on greater co-operation from the prospective tenant.

### *3.7 Selective Licensing*

The Selective Licensing Scheme was launched in May 2009. The initial scheme covers some 520 properties in areas that scored highly on a matrix that ranked streets in terms of crime, cases of anti-social behaviour, and low demand.

The scheme links with the anti-social behaviour unit by sharing information on landlord applicants so that any past issues the unit has had with the landlord may be flagged up. Landlords in these areas are strongly recommended to use the GTS, and where their referencing can be shown not to have been effective, can be required to use the GTS.

## **4. Operation of the Scheme**

4.1 Applicants are required to complete an application form which is available electronically or from a variety of points across the town, namely the New Deal office in York  
10.05.14 - Comm Safe & Hsg PF - 2.1 - Evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme App 1

## APPENDIX 1

Road, the Civic Centre, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Anti-Social behaviour Unit and the Housing Options Centre. The applicant's signature on the form gives consent to share information for the purpose of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour with a variety of partners.

The applicant needs to provide two forms of identification and attend to have their photograph taken.

4.2 Following receipt of the form the Scheme requests information from the Housing Benefit Section to verify that the details given regarding housing history are correct, confirms the identity of the applicant to prevent identity fraud, and requests via email any information held by partner agencies which could influence the outcome of the application. Former landlords are then contacted to give a reference. In a number of cases the perpetrator has attempted to subvert the GTS process by giving false addresses, however in most cases these have been identified through the verification process. One case of attempting to create a false identity was also discovered and reported to the Police.

4.3 The Tenant Referencing Officer then makes a decision on membership category. Once an outcome has been decided the relevant colour coded membership card is issued along with a letter outlining the review and appeal process.

To receive Full membership (green card) an applicant must be able to provide evidence of two year's housing history with no anti-social behaviour or other significant tenancy issues. Full membership lasts for one year before review.

Members with a record of serious anti social behaviour or other matters which would make them unsuitable for membership have their membership declined.

Examples of reasons for declining membership include:

- repeated disturbances and nuisance including fighting and street drinking
- repeated verbal and racial abuse of neighbours
- convictions for drug dealing or domestic burglary

Provisional membership is available to those applicants who may not have adequate references but who do not warrant having their membership declined.

The majority of applicants receive a yellow provisional card. As the scheme has developed, these yellow cards have been differentiated into a number of categories, and these are listed below.

- First tenancy or no recent tenancy history
- Rent arrears
- Other tenancy management problems that could effect neighbours
- Minor ASB or crime
- Supported tenancies. Tenants that would otherwise be declined but who are engaging with agreed support that will allow them to live in a successful tenancy.

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- Passported Membership – where the applicant is fleeing domestic violence and enquiries with previous landlords could help previous partners locate them, or where the Scheme has been unable to secure a reliable reference

## 4.4 The Review Process.

Provisional membership is granted for 6 months then reviewed.

The criteria for review as the scheme was set up is below. Experience of running the scheme indicated that this was very resource intensive and that some reviews were unnecessary as there had been no change of circumstances. Revised criteria are shown at appendix 1.

Original membership category	Criteria for improvement	Review result (full unless stated)	Review Period
Full membership			12 Months
Provisional 1st tenancy	Hold a tenancy for 2 years or achieve a total of 2 years recent and valid tenancy history		6 months
Provisional - rent arrears	Repay any arrears due, or make and maintain an agreement to repay		6 months
Provisional - supported	Continue to engage with support & hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years	Provisional or Full	6 months or on agreement with support agency
Provisional - minor ASB	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years		6 months
Passported	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years		6 months
Rejected - evicted for rent or tenancy management	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months	Provisional	3 months
Rejected - ASB or crime	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months	Provisional - supported or ASB	3 months
Rejected - Drugs offences	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months	Provisional - supported or ASB	3 months

## 4.5 Appeals

Should an applicant disagree with the outcome of their application they have the right to have the case reviewed by the Social behaviour and Housing Manager and should they still disagree with the outcome there is provision within the scheme for the decision to go to an independent appeal panel made up of one officer from the Supported Housing Panel, one from the Community Safety Team ( not the ASBU ) and one Landlord. To date there have been no requests for review or appeals.

#### 4.6 Use of scheme

Once a card is issued the applicant is able to demonstrate their suitability as tenant to the landlord. The landlord is recommended to contact the GTS to verify that the information that led to the issuance of the card is still current ( i.e. that there has been no anti-social behaviour recorded in the meantime.). Such information requests are logged so that the GTS can demonstrate which landlords are actively using the scheme.

GTS case records are held on the CIVICA case management system (formerly known as FLARE ) which is shared by the ASBU, the private sector housing team and Housing Hartlepool.

#### 4.7 Governance

The Scheme has been developed through quarterly meetings of a steering group, chaired by the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Protection , and attended by representatives from the police, the Private Sector Housing team, the Housing Advice Team and the Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

## **5 Operational Issues and responses**

As the scheme has developed a number of operating issues have been identified. For instance, the scheme was not set up in such a way that it is easy to identify which landlords are using the scheme or for which properties, or how the scheme has impacted on the ability of applicants to move. As a result applicants are now telephoned six weeks after their application to check on their current address.

#### 5.1 Processing Delays

The scheme aims to process applications within 10 working days of receiving all the required information from the applicant. Initially this proved to be difficult to achieve, and a number of factors were identified as being central to these delays.

#### 5.12 Postal References

In the early days of the scheme the biggest cause of delay in the system was the provision of references from former landlords. The majority of these are now carried out over the phone or via email which has significantly reduced delays.

#### 5.13 Verification of identity & housing history via Housing Benefits.

*On occasion there has been significant delay in receiving the housing benefit verification. Despite the best endeavours of the Benefits Team, they have on occasion been unable to keep pace with the information requests generated by the GTS and this has led to some delays in processing. This was identified as a possible weakness when the scheme was first proposed, and direct access was requested. However at the time the scheme commenced the Benefits Team believed there was capacity to deal with requests within an agreed 24 hour timescale. This has not been achieved on a consistent basis.*

5.2 *Reliance on a single officer*

The GTS is dependent on one member of staff, the Tenant Referencing Officer ( TRO ), making the assessment of suitability for membership and category of membership. Whilst initial case logging actions ( scanning of the application form onto the system, taking of photograph, requesting of HB verification, request of partner information ) are undertaken by the Anti-social behaviour unit ( ASBU ) administrative team, the outcome decision in many cases needs to have officer input due to the complexity of the issues to be taken into account.

The ASBU has trialled the delegation of this decision- making to the area ASB officers when the TRO has been on leave. Whilst this increases the workload of these officers such that careful prioritisation is required, it gives the scope for these officers to have greater overview and input into the area they manage.

In the future it is anticipated that the initial case logging actions listed above could be undertaken by Hartlepool Connect. This would be dependent on shared access to the Civica system, which is used to manage cases across a number of functions within the Council. This system is due to be upgraded, and until this takes place this development is on hold.

5.3 *Attrition*

One area of note has been the number of applicants who fail to complete the application process, which the scheme refers to as “attrition”. This has implications on a number of levels, including scheme cost effectiveness as although the reason the application may not have been completed may rest with the applicant, the scheme has already expended a considerable amount of resources issuing, receiving, logging and processing the application.

It is worth noting however that this attrition rate has been reducing over the time the GTS has been running. It is believed that the increased speed in dealing with applications may have influenced this improvement , coupled with an increase in landlords requiring their tenants to use the scheme.

The table below indicates how the attrition rate has dropped.

	1.5.08-30.10.08	1.11.08-30.4.09	1.5.09-30.10.09	Overall Total
Applications received	294	326	339	959
Not completed	118	152	142	315
Percentage	40%	35%	24%	33%

6. **Evaluation Methodology**

This evaluation was carried out using a variety of techniques.

Desk top analysis was carried out of the applications and their outcomes; questionnaires were sent out to a sample of applicants and landlords, and these were followed up by focus groups. Comparisons were undertaken with some other local schemes; SWOT ( Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses were done with the Housing Advice Centre and the private sector housing team



## 6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent out to a minimum of a 10% sample of applicants in each of the categories, red, yellow, green and not completed. In an attempt to ensure a good return rate those being sent the form were telephoned in advance and asked if they would be willing to take part in the survey.

### Survey Returns

Membership Category	Questionnaires		Return as % of	
	Issued	Returned	Forms issued	Total Membership
Full Members	23	12	52%	12%
Provisional Members	88	36	41%	8%
Rejected	11	5	45%	6%
Incomplete applications	42	5	11%	2%
Total	164	58	35%	6%

From the above we can see that although we achieved a 35% return on questionnaires issued, the percentage of returns from those who did not complete the process was low. This needs to be borne in mind in assessing the returns. Further attempts were made to carry out the questionnaire over the phone with applications that had not been completed but these attempts met with limited success.

This was unfortunate as the high attrition rate merits further investigation. Possible causes are

- Self-selection - applicants believe they may not get good references so choose not to pursue the application.
- Applicant has already moved - a landlord was found who did not use the GTS
- Poor literacy - Applicant was unable to respond to the follow up letter

## 6.2 Landlord Survey

Questionnaires were sent out to 170 landlords and a 26% return rate was achieved

For the landlord questionnaires, no telephone call was made as a prelude to the questionnaires being sent out. 170 questionnaires were issued to landlords who had had contact with the scheme, or who had past involvement with anti social tenants according to Anti-social Behaviour Unit records. 44 were returned, a rate of 26%.

The questionnaire for landlords requested the number of properties owned or managed by each respondent, but this has not been used to give weight to any particular respondent. and this needs to be borne in mind in assessing the responses.

### 6.2 Focus Groups

Two meetings were held, one for landlords and one for applicants. Those invited to take part in the focus groups were handpicked to represent a range of views and an attempt was

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made to invite those whose voices were not regularly heard. The structure of the Focus Groups was that of a semi-guided discussion. Notes of the focus groups are appended.

### 6.3 Benchmarking

There are difficulties in making direct comparisons with other schemes as the GTS is by design tailored to suite the local needs, requirements and available resources originally identified on commissioning. However telephone interviews took place with schemes in Durham and Stockton. The Durham scheme was under review following the creation of the new unitary council. This scheme gave pointers of good practice in that it makes links with the private sector housing team and refers tenants to landlords who maintain their stock well and are members of the landlord accreditation scheme.

The Stockton Scheme is a straight referencing scheme, as opposed to a passport style scheme such as the GTS. This means that their scheme is not directly comparable, in that there no traffic light system, and no system of reviews; or links to support.

### 6.4 Informal discussions

Discussions based around the SWOT ( Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats ) were held with the Private sector housing team and the Housing Advice centre team on the scheme in general and with the Supported Housing Co-ordinator on the specific issue of the impact of the scheme on support services.

## 7. Evaluation Findings

### 7.1 Findings of the Focus Groups

Both groups were supportive of the scheme, and recognised the long term nature of the project.

The discussions in both focus groups supported the questionnaire results indicating that the current review periods and criteria may need revision.

Residents in particular were concerned that there was no mechanism to allow the community to be reassured that landlords in their area were cooperating with the scheme. There was some discussion about the possibility of window stickers being issued for landlords to place in the windows of their properties to indicate that they used the scheme.

There was some confusion about the respective roles of the Housing Advice team, the Private Sector Housing team and the Anti-social behaviour unit, particularly from the residents' focus group.

### 7.2 Findings of questionnaires-

The evaluation found that there is confidence from applicants and landlords alike that the scheme has the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour though it was recognised that this is a long term project. Both landlords and applicants agreed with our definitions of what made a good tenant. There was a strong perception (71%) from tenants that the GTS helps

**APPENDIX 1**

tenants get a tenancy. The responses of both landlords and applicants indicated a number of areas that could require further examination, and these were in part used to shape the questions put to the focus groups. Particularly of note was the question of how long qualification and review periods should be, as shown in the table below.

**Views of time period to be taken into account for initial assessment and subsequent review period to move for 'yellow' to 'green'.**

	Initial assessment Landlords (%)	Initial Assessment Applicants (%)	To qualify as Good Tenant Landlords (%)	To qualify as Good Tenant Applicants (%)
More than 2 years	48	54	15	25
2 years	33	17	26	17
1 year	12	29	46	41
6 months	Not asked	Not asked	10	39

One in four respondents to the user questionnaire stated that the existence of the scheme would make them more aware of their behaviour in tenancies in future.

76% of residents found the scheme simple and easy to use.

### 7.3 Links to support

There were concerns from the outset that the operation of the scheme may impact on the service offered by the Housing Advice Centre, by making it more difficult for the team to find accommodation for those with a history of Anti-social Behaviour.

In practice to date the Housing Advice team have not experienced difficulty, and there has been no increase in homelessness as a result of the GTS having been set up, though this may not remain the case once the over-supply of properties through regeneration has been addressed.

The Housing Advice team does not actively promote the Good Tenant Scheme, and has not felt the need to do so as they have themselves developed good links with landlords in the town who regularly accommodate their client group.

The initial concern that the GTS may swamp the Housing Support system with referrals has not materialised. The Scheme has made 41 referrals to support through the Supported Housing Panel and 13 to the Keys to Success training course run by Housing Hartlepool. 13 current members have been granted membership conditional on their receiving on-going support. 115 applicants were already in receipt of support at the time of application, 44 allocated through the Supported Housing Panel, and 71 accessing support provided by other agencies.

However there is considerable concern that a number of the support programmes which are dependent on the Supporting People fund are facing closure from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

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This has serious implications for the impact of the GTS on homelessness in a small number of cases as the GTS. It is premised on the provision of appropriate support to enable behavioural change in the more challenging cases. If this support is not available the applications could be declined, leading to an increased chance of homelessness.

The Housing Options Centre would like to incorporate the Good Tenant Scheme and link it to the referencing carried out as part of the Choice Based Lettings scheme. The scheme has faced difficulty in having its criteria mirror those of the choice based lettings scheme in relation to rent arrears ( the differences are noted as appendix 2) and this would need to be addressed before the scheme could be incorporated into the Choice Based Letting process.

### 7.3 Private Sector Housing team

There was some concern that because the GTS is based in a different part of HBC and historically the officer now dealing with the GTS previously dealt with the landlord accreditation scheme there was a danger that some landlords could play off one part of HBC against another. It was recognised that there was scope for closer working relations and a need to clarify the respective roles of the LRO and the Accreditation Officer.

### 7.4 Impact on Housing Benefits

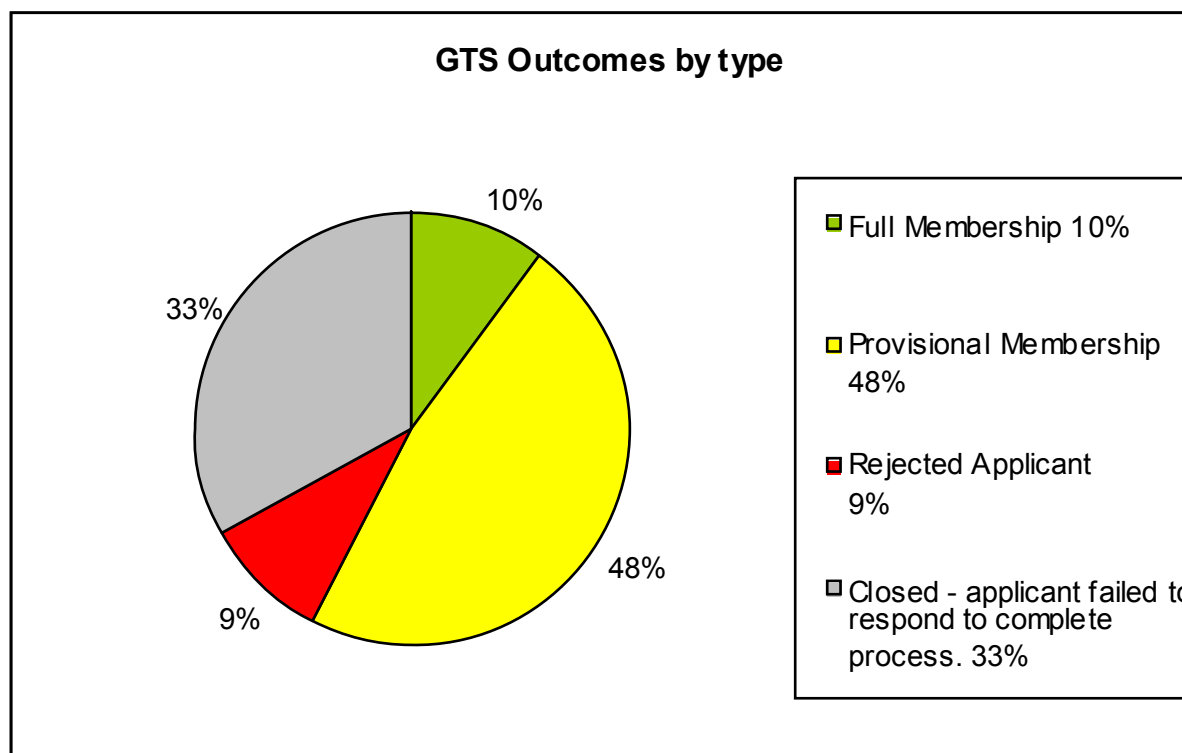
Below is a table of the contacts that have been made with the Housing Benefit Section in verifying the identity of GTS applicants.

Month	July 09	August 09	September 09	October 09
Telephone calls	133	179	78	39
E-mails	191	71	70	55
Faxes	91	23	52	33

A discussion with the section manager revealed that these contacts take up 60% of the working hours of one staff member with the remaining 40% of that person's time being taken up by similar queries generated by the Selective Licensing Scheme. It would be more cost effective to have viewing access to the Housing Benefits system (I-CLIPSE) made available to the Selective Licensing and GTS schemes. This could also reduce processing times for the GTS scheme as delays in this part of the process impact on achieving target times.

### 7.5 Desk top Analysis

At 31<sup>st</sup> October, after eighteen months of operation, a total of 959 applications had been received, 862 had been processed and 97 were currently being processed. The results of the applications that had been processed are shown in the following pie chart ( overleaf)



In summary,

99-- Green cards have been issued

447--- yellow cards have been issued and

90 --- applications have been rejected.

315--- Applications were closed with no outcome after the applicant failed to respond to correspondence.

97 were being progressed

### 7.51 Impact

One of the ways it was originally suggested that the impact of the scheme could be monitored was the movement of cases through the traffic light system. This has yet to prove conclusive due to the requirement to have 2 years' housing history before a green card is issued.

10-- have moved from red to yellow

2---have moved from yellow to green.

This low number is expected to rise in the next year as the scheme currently requires evidence of two years of trouble-free tenancy before a green card is issued, and the scheme has only been in operation for eighteen months.

Conversely

4-- have moved from yellow to red and

1--has moved from green to red.

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However, there were 277 reviews outstanding at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009- i.e 43% of cases were due a review. At the time of writing this figure was steadily reducing as access to the I-CLIPSE system has been negotiated.

As the scheme was designed to reduce anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector, it was to be hoped that the evaluation would indicate that the proportion of cases in this sector had started to fall. Analysis of cases dealt with by the Anti-social behaviour unit show that in the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008, 38.6% of cases involved the private rented sector compared to 30.6% for the corresponding period the following year. However these figures mask the fact that tenure details were not recorded for 39% of cases in 2008 and 40% of cases in 2009 so that this apparent reduction may not relate to the true situation.

### 7.6 Outcomes of Landlord Questionnaires

Salient points of the survey are:

- 60% of respondent use the Scheme either as a stand alone measure or alongside other forms of referencing.
- 31% have declined granting a tenancy due to information received via the GTS.
- 30% have granted tenancies they otherwise would not have done as a result of the scheme, (which supports the initial claims made at introduction that the GTS would help reduce homelessness.)
- 41% believe the GTS offers them access to relevant information that they would otherwise not have had

There was little evidence that membership category had a significant impact on the quality of property offered, with only 5% of landlords stating they will only rent to those with full (Green ) GTS cards, and 12% offering better tenancies to Green card holders.

Overall landlords were happy with current processing times, although 50% of landlords think that 5 working days is a reasonable timeframe for a reference to take, with only 20% thinking that the 10 working day target the GTS currently works to is appropriate.

5 days is achievable where there are no delays in verifying identity and previous housing history via Housing Benefits, and if previous landlords are contactable by phone or email.

### 7.7 Value for money

The Good Tenant Scheme is expensive to run. In terms of officer time within the Anti-social behaviour unit, the scheme occupies one officer full time and ten hours of administration time. In addition each application is passed to the Housing Benefits team for the identity of the applicant to be checked. The environmental team, police, Housing Hartlepool and previous landlords are also contacted.

A landlord can obtain references using an on-line company for only £10 per time according to various websites although it should be stressed that these references are based on searches of on line databases of convictions, court judgements and credit reference scores.

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Against this needs to be balanced the fact that the references that result from the GTS are more comprehensive; targeted; incorporate reviews, and, over time, will continue to build a picture of applicant behaviour as a file of references from previous landlords are built up.

The Stockton Scheme deals with around 100 references per month and is run by one full time officer equivalent , giving an average cost of £20 per reference. This compares with the GTS –at an average cost of £63.00 per reference, including reviews. If the scheme were to convert all applications to references a saving of 33% in costs would be achieved bringing the cost per reference from £63.00 down to £42.00.

### 8 Conclusions

8.1 The Good Tenant Scheme appears to be understood and accepted by landlords, residents and other service providers. There is confidence that the scheme is well placed to make an impact in reducing anti-social behaviour.

8.2 The impact will be greater once Selective Licensing is more strongly established and the Housing Market Renewal Programme has dealt with the over-supply of properties which undermine attempts to restrict the housing choices of those exhibiting anti-social behaviour.

8.3 More work needs to be done to ensure that the scheme has a clear idea of which landlords are using the scheme and where those in receipt of green, yellow and red cards move to ensure that outcomes can be more closely monitored for future reports.

8.4 Residents want to be reassured that new tenants moving into their area have been through the Good Tenant Scheme

8.5 More work needs to be done to monitor where those with red cards move to.

8.6 There is scope to improve working relations between the various sections involved in providing housing services across Hartlepool.

8.7 There is a lack of consistency by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in recording tenure in its casework.

8.8 More work needs to be done to follow up applications to reduce the percentage who do not complete the process.

### 9 Recommendations

#### 9.1 Value for Money

The Scheme needs to find ways of streamlining processes to become more efficient. Ideas to pursue to achieve this are as follows

- Direct Access to the I-Clipse scanning system in Housing Benefits – this would cut down on staff time in Housing benefit and delays in awaiting their responses, and thus improve both initial assessment times and reviews. This has now been agreed in principle and as an interim measure access has been arranged within the Civic centre for a member of the anti-social behaviour administration team .

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- Once the Flare system upgrade has been completed, pursue the use of Hartlepool Connect in initiating applications.
- More follow up of applications to reduce the attrition rate will bring down the average cost per completed reference. Engagement of other officers across the Community Safety and Protection Division who carry out visits as part of their day to day work, such as anti-social behaviour officers and housing advice workers could achieve this with minimal disruption to their routine.
- Changes to the review criteria as indicated at appendix 1 to be implemented.

### 9.2 Assessing Impact

- The scheme needs to find a consistent way to monitor where applicants live at the time of application.
- More needs to be done to discover and disseminate information relating to relocations of those rejected by the GTS scheme and to link them to support wherever possible.
- Ways need to be found to reassure residents that the scheme is being used in their area.
- The Anti-social behaviour unit needs to develop consistency in recording tenure details in relation to cases to enable impact to be assessed.

### 9.3 Clarifying roles

Opportunities for merging the scheme with other elements of the housing service may help to reduce confusion on the part of the public and some landlords regarding the respective roles of various parts of the council.

Consideration be given to the creation of a landlord and tenant section which would link the Accreditation Scheme, the Selective Licensing Scheme, the Supported Housing Panel and the Good Tenant Scheme. This would need to take account of the links existing between the Landlord Accreditation Scheme; Selective Licensing, and the Housing Standards Enforcement Team. This will be dealt with through the Service Delivery review taking place during 2010 as part of the Business Transformation Process. Regardless of this more needs to be done to create linkages and better working relations between these sections.



## List of Appendices

- 1 Changes to review Criteria
- 2 Comparison of Choice Based Letting and GTS vis a vis rent arrears.
- 3 Notes of the landlords' focus group
- 4 Notes of the tenants' focus group
- 5 Comparison of the GTS and Choice Based Letting exclusion criteria
- 6 Questionnaire summary- Landlords
- 7 Questionnaire summary- Applicants

## References

Minutes of Private Sector Project

Scrutiny Report into the Operation of the Private Sector Housing Market

Cabinet Report 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008- - The Introduction of tenant Referencing

Cabinet Report- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008- The Operation of the Good Tenant Scheme

Portfolio Report 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – the Development and Evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme

Minutes of the Good Tenant Scheme Steering group

TIES Report 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 by Ken Natt

## Appendix 1-CHANGES TO REVIEW CRITERIA

Original membership category	Current criteria for improvement	Review result (full unless stated)	Current Review Period	Proposed changes
Full membership			6 months initially then 12 Months	Initial review at 12 months, then 24 months thereafter
Provisional 1st tenancy	Hold a tenancy for 2 years or achieve a total of 2 years recent and valid tenancy history		6 months	Review after 12 months tenancy history with option to grant full at that time. If no tenancy held during this period contact applicant to advise membership has expired and invite new application
Provisional - rent arrears	Repay any arrears due, or make and maintain an agreement to repay		6 months	see table "GTS & CBL Harmonisation – Rent issues"
Provisional - supported	Continue to engage with support & hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years	Provisional or Full	6 months or on agreement with support agency	None
Provisional - minor ASB	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years		6 months	Review after 12 months tenancy history with option to grant full at that time.
Passported	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 2 years		6 months	Review period of 12 months with option to grant full at that time.
Rejected - evicted for rent or tenancy management	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months	Provisional	3 months	Change review period to 6 months in tenancy
Rejected - ASB or crime	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months	Provisional - supported or ASB	3 months	3 or 6 month review based on circumstances
Rejected - Drugs offences	Hold a trouble free tenancy for 6 months, engage with support if offered	Provisional - supported or ASB	3 months	3 or 6 month review based on circumstances

Appendix2 GTS & CBL Harmonisation – Rent issues (*Italic* text indicates areas where CBL & GTS differ significantly)

Bold indicates proposed changes to GTS

Circumstances	Choice Based Lettings	Current GTS	Proposed GTS
Current Rent Arrears	No offers made until repaid, ineligible if possession being pursued at courts.	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Decline if currently seeking possession through Courts. Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. <i>Review every 26 weeks.</i>	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Decline if currently seeking possession through Courts. Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. <i>Review every 26 weeks.</i>
Former Tenant Arrears < £500	No offers made until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed & maintained for 13 weeks.	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. <i>Review every 26 weeks</i>	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if no current arrears ( <b>FTAs discounted IF current rent account situation is the result of tenant action</b> ), otherwise continued Provisional Membership. <i>Review every 26 weeks.</i>
Former Tenant Arrears > £500	No offers made until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed & maintained for 26 weeks.	Offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks.	Offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if no current arrears ( <b>FTAs discounted IF current rent account situation is the result of tenant action</b> ), otherwise continued Provisional Membership. <i>Review every 52 weeks.</i>
Evicted for rent arrears	Ineligible for 52 weeks if evicted for arrears or until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed	Membership declined unless repaid. Advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. <i>Review in 13 weeks with view to granting Provisional</i>	Membership declined unless repaid. Advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. <b>Review in 26 weeks</b> with view to granting Provisional Membership

	& maintained for 26 weeks, reviewed after 26 weeks.	<i>Membership if agreement maintained</i>	if agreement maintained.
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Appendix 3

Landlord Focus Group Notes

As part of the Good Tenant Scheme Evaluation process a Focus Group consisting of local landlords and property agents selected for their experience of anti social tenants was held on 21/10/09.

The group consisted of

Richard Ord – Private Landlord with a large personal portfolio who also manages other landlord property

David Spenceley – Private landlord with a small portfolio.

Julie Richardson – “traditional” established managing agent operating in the town for 20 years

Tony Weed (The Property Supermarket) managing agent

Jill Gavin (Hartlepool Property Management) member of staff from largest managing agent in the town.

Ken Natt – Tenant Referencing Officer (Facilitating)

Apologies were received from Ray Clementson (landlord with small portfolio)

The group was asked to discuss a number of topics relating to anti social behaviour and the Good Tenant Scheme. These are shown in Bold.

What is a Good Tenant?

There was a general consensus that the three issues were , - pays rent on time, looks after the property and doesn't cause problems with the neighbours.

The group felt landlords needed to be very wary of the accuracy of information provided by persons looking for accommodation, and that they use their own judgement when selecting tenants.

It was also important that landlords report poor tenants to the GTS.

“you do have to be careful. Some of the applications (from prospective tenants) are incorrect”

“we have been taken in a couple of times”

How long should a tenant hold a tenancy before they are thought of as a Good Tenant?

The group thought that there was at least a full year of tenancy history before an assessment were made because of the various seasonal factors that could impact on tenant behaviour & performance

Landlords also felt regular reviews were in order.

Where a tenant had a history of poor behaviour the period should be longer than for those who have not held a tenancy before.

On the matter of rent arrears, and where the arrears amount was reducing, the group felt that it was important to identify if the reduction was as a result of the tenant action or direct payment of benefits. The group felt that a tenant should make a personal effort to reduce arrears and not have that done for them by a third party.

“twelve months is the absolute minimum, you need to see how a tenant deals with the full (yearly) cycle”

“it has to be twelve months, so you get to see them through all the seasons, Christmas, birthdays, St Georges Day, whatever”

Before granting a tenancy, what information does a landlord need, and how do they get it?

The group felt that first impressions counted for a great deal, and therefore stressed the need to meet the tenant face to face, wherever possible in the tenant's current home. Other than that the group felt it needed information on any previous anti social behaviour, rent arrears, family size, income and pets.

“Where they're coming from, the previous address, who the landlord was, how much they can afford to pay, the size of the family, whether they have any pets, are they working or do they claim benefits”

“first impressions, when you meet the person for the first time, are important. Then you need to know about anti social behaviour, rent arrears or other problems”

#### What makes a landlord offer better or worse tenancies to applicants?

The decision to offer tenancies was based on the information available to landlords, either provided by the tenant or from other sources such as the GTS.

All recognised the existence of “Single Person Houses” which they would normally be unable to let to families and working people because they were in undesirable areas such as Dent St or Baden St. The group also felt that there were different standards that were applied in different parts of the town, and that some behaviour would be acceptable in Perth St (for example) that would not be elsewhere, and that they took this into account when offering tenancies.

“it depends on what they can afford”

“If they're single they would usually fare better in a two bedroom house”

“I think we all acknowledge that we all have houses that we class as single person houses”.

#### How do you find Good Tenants?

The most reliable methods were recommendation and word of mouth. The group also accepted that much was down to individual experience and instinct. All recommended a visit to the current tenancy to see how it is managed.

The Smartmove scheme was mentioned with mixed views. Some members thought they got good tenants, or at least tenants with an agreed support framework that helped the tenancy succeed. Others were less enthusiastic about the scheme, mainly because the bond offered only covered damages to property not rent arrears. The “one chance only” policy was felt to be positive.

The Housing Advice Team was less well received, one commenting that “40-50% of my bad tenants come from them”

“I find good tenants and bad tenants the same way, they walk in through the front door”

#### Is anti social behaviour a Landlord problem

The group agreed ASB was a landlord’s problem, and were sympathetic to the plight of residents who had anti social neighbours. However, they felt that the powers available to landlords to address asb were insufficient, cumbersome and time consuming to use. The group again mentioned different standards were in place in different parts of the town, and that some behaviour acceptable in (for instance) Perth St would not be in other parts of the town.

“Tenants have got to respect their neighbours, or they have to go”

#### What do you think about the Good Tenant Scheme, does it work and how can it work better?

The group were broadly supportive of the GTS, but some problems still remained. These mainly revolved around sharing information and processing time. Initially processing time was an issue, but this has improved dramatically over the life of the scheme.

Landlords felt the scheme was now established with some landlords and should concentrate on expanding to encourage more landlords to use it.

The group also felt that cards should be given an issue number that would show how long they had been on a particular membership category.

The group felt online checking would be helpful, but accepted that this would be difficult due to data protection issues.

“It’s a good scheme, I used it virtually from the start and only one has gone wrong so far”

“A good idea. Any scheme that helps us find a good tenant is a good idea, but you always get a percentage that shouldn’t get a (GTS) card”

“initially we had speed issues – how quickly the card was being processed, but that’s getting better and better, faster and faster the further we get into the scheme, to the point where we ring up and they have been done the same day. Also a lot more people are now walking in with the cards already. Six months ago that wasn’t the case”

“we need to let the Good Tenant Scheme run a bit more, it’s still in its infancy”

There were a number of issues raised at the group that did not directly relate to the Good Tenant Scheme. These will be reported to the relevant departments for their information.



App. 4.

**Residents Focus Group**

As part of the Good Tenant Scheme Evaluation process a Focus Group consisting of local Residents Association members with experience of anti social tenants was held on 16/10/09. In attendance were representatives from:

Dent \ Derwent Residents Association

Dyke House Residents Association

Burn Valley North Residents Association

Belle View Residents Association

Furness, Cameron & Belk Sts Residents Association

Ken Natt – Tenant Referencing Officer (Facilitating)

Hartwell & Oxford Rd Residents Association sent their apologies.

The group was asked to discuss a number of topics relating to anti social behaviour and the Good Tenant Scheme. These are shown in **Bold**.

**What is a Good Tenant?**

Someone who looks after the house as their own, a good neighbour and respects the community. The group stressed the importance of keeping the street tidy and the property looking reasonable, taking bins in and not dumping rubbish. They were also concerned at the frequency

of tenants moving, which contributed towards an unsettled neighbourhood. This was not helped by the recent renewal program that had contributed to an increase in tenants moving. The group also felt very strongly that good landlords attract good tenants, and identified two distinct groups of tenants, those who were working, and those that were in receipt of long term benefits. The group felt that this second group was a significant contribution to the problems in the streets.

*“if you make a mess on the front, you clean the mess up”*

*“To have a good tenant you have to have a good landlord”*

*“its always the good tenants that suffer (with anti social behaviour)”*

#### **How long should a tenant hold a tenancy before they are thought of as a Good Tenant?**

The group felt that there were two separate groups, those with no previous history or problems, and those that did. Where there was no previous history the group felt a year was sufficient, but when there had been a problem the group felt longer should be given, both to allow them to show they had amended their behaviour and to allow any support to start working properly.

*“you can guarantee some of them will revert back to whatever they were doing before”*

#### **What should a landlord do about anti social behaviour?**

The group held that landlords were not responsible for the actions of their tenants, but at the same time they did have a duty to manage the tenancy and deal with problems. Out of town landlords and the problems contacting landlords were highlighted as major issues. The group felt landlords should have a local and easily contactable person who could act to deal with problems. It was recognised the landlords sometimes lacked the power to deal effectively and quickly with problem tenants. The main role a landlord should take was to ensure they took proper references before granting tenancies, and not grant tenancies to anti social or criminal applicants.

*“they buy into the area, they should have some care”*

*“vetting the tenant properly is essential”*

**What do you think about the Good Tenant Scheme, does it work and how can it work better?**

The group thought the Good Tenant Scheme was working, but there were still issues. The main problems were the voluntary nature of the scheme, and a lack of confidence due to the lack of publicity and information about who was using the scheme. Residents would be reassured if they knew new tenants had been through the scheme. The failure to make use of the scheme compulsory through the use of Selective Licensing, and the perceived pressure placed on landlords to accept poor tenants from the Local Authority Homeless Team was also identified as barriers to the scheme succeeding.

The group were against using methods such as stickers on windows to identify landlords who were cooperating by using the scheme because they felt it stigmatised the residents and risked the property being attacked by bad elements trying to make them move out.

*“It’s an excellent idea. Does it work? Some of it does”*

*“Unless you can tell us who has been through it, how can we tell?”*

*“Its not compulsory.....so you can get some landlords to work with it, but the bad landlords?”*

*“We should be shouting about the scheme from the rooftops”*

*“If someone moves into my street, I would like to know they have been through the scheme first”*

**How should the Good Tenant Scheme measure success or failure**

The group discussed how the scheme should measure success. The main indicators were felt to be visual – clean streets, clean & tidy houses, regularly repainted and a reduction in visible Police presence. If landlords were forced to keep their houses in reasonable condition they would be more likely to put a good tenant in.

*“Clean Streets, Clean Houses, Respect”*

*“You can tell just by looking which are rented houses”*

There were a number of issues raised at the group that did not directly relate to the Good Tenant Scheme. These will be reported to the relevant departments for their information.

Appendix 5- GTS & CBL Harmonisation – Rent issues. *Italic font* indicates areas where CBL & GTS differ significantly **Bold** indicates proposed changes to GTS

Circumstances	Choice Based Lettings	Current GTS	Proposed GTS
Current Rent Arrears	No offers made until repaid, ineligible if possession being pursued at courts.	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Decline if currently seeking possession through Courts. Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks.	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Decline if currently seeking possession through Courts. Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks.
Former Tenant Arrears < £500	No offers made until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed & maintained for <i>13 weeks</i> .	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks	<i>Arrears of &lt; £100 discounted.</i> Other arrears offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if no current arrears ( <i>FTAs discounted</i> ), otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks.
Former Tenant Arrears > £500	No offers made until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed & maintained for 26 weeks.	Offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if repaid, otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every 26 weeks.	Offered Provisional Membership, advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Full Membership on review if no current arrears ( <i>FTAs discounted</i> ), otherwise continued Provisional Membership. Review every <i>52 weeks</i> .
Evicted for rent arrears	Ineligible for 52 weeks if evicted for arrears or until paid in full or a formal repayment schedule agreed & maintained for 26 weeks, reviewed after <i>26 weeks</i> .	Membership declined unless repaid. Advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Review in <i>13 weeks with</i> view to granting Provisional Membership if agreement maintained	Membership declined unless repaid. Advised to make mutually acceptable repayment agreement. Review in 26 weeks with view to granting Provisional Membership if agreement maintained.

Appendix 6 - Landlord Survey

**Q1. Have you ever used the GTS?**

Yes (54%)

No (Go to Question 10) (36%)

**Q2. How easy do you find using the GTS?**

Simple and straightforward (31%)

Reasonably easy to use (21%)

Difficult and/or complicated to use (0%)

**Q3. How do you use the GTS?**

I only rent to full time members (Green card holders) (5%)

I will only use it in Selective Licensing areas (3%)

I will consider Provisional Members for tenancies (Yellow card holders) (23%)

I don't use the GTS, I use other references (3%)

I will offer tenancies to yellow card holders only if they have support (13%)

I use other references and the GTS (31%)

**Q4. Have you declined a tenancy because of information the GTS provided?**

Yes (31%) No (21%)

**Q5. Have you granted a tenancy that you would normally not have done because of information the GTS**

**provided?**

No (15%) Yes (31%)

**Q6. Has the GTS provided you with information you would not normally have discovered?**

Yes (41%) No (13%)

I will offer better properties to Full Members (Green card holders) (13%)

I don't take references (0%)

Never heard of it (Go to Question 10) (5%) On average, how accurate, reliable and fair do you think the GTS assessments of tenants are?

(tick the box that applies)

**Q7. Do you charge tenants for the referencing you do, and if so, how much on average?**

no (21%)

**Q8 Are you happy to cooperate by exchanging information (with the applicants permission) with the GTS?**

Yes (95%) No (0%)

**Q9. How long do you think it is reasonable to wait for a reference?**

Less than 5 working days (10%)

5 working days (1 week) (51%)

10 working days (2 weeks) (21%)

15 working days (3 weeks) (0%)

20 working days (4 weeks) (5%)

**Q10. If you have suffered delays, has this improved in the past year?**

Yes (13%) No (10%) Don't know (33%)

**Q11. If you use the GTS, does this slow your letting's process down more than using other referencing?**

No (15%) Yes, and the delay meant I lost rental income (8%)

I don't usually take references (0%)

Yes, but not significantly (36%)

Yes, and the delay meant I offered the tenancy to someone else (3%)

Don't know (13%)

**Q12. If you use other referencing systems, how long do they usually take?**

Less than 1 week (23%) 1 - 2 Weeks (21%) 2 - 4 weeks (10%)

**Q13. Do you pay for referencing services, and if so, how much on average?**

£1 - £10 (8%) £10 - £30 (10%) £30 - £50 (0%) £50 - £100 (3%) Above £100 (0%)

**Q14. What references do you usually take before offering a tenancy?**

Financial checks (36%) Employment checks (38%)

Speak to previous landlords (77%) I follow my instincts (38%)

Request the applicant provide references (69%) None (3%)

**Q15 How do you rate the fairness of the system ?**

Good (36%) Average (10%) Poor (0%)

**Q16. Accuracy?**

Good (41%)

Average (8%)

Poor (0%)

**Q17. Reliability?**

Good (36%)

Average (13%)

Poor (0%)

**Q18 We think the following are important in being a good Neighbour and a good tenant: do you agree?**

. Keeping house and garden tidy? (Please tick one)

Strongly Agree (82%) Agree (13%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%)

. Not playing music or making excessive noise late at night? (Please tick one)

Strongly Agree (90%) Agree (5%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%)

. Paying rent on time? (Please tick one)

Don't Care (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Agree (82%) Agree (8%)

Treating Neighbours with consideration and respect? (Please tick one)

Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%) Strongly Agree (87%) Agree (8%)

. Not allowing criminal activity including illegal drugs use in your property? (Please tick one)

Don't Care (0%) Strongly Agree (95%) Agree (0%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%)

**19 How long do you think a person should hold a tenancy before they can be called a good tenant?**

6 months (10%) More than 2 years (13%)

1 year (46%) More than 5 years (0%)

2 years (26%)



**19. How far back do you think the Good Tenant Scheme should go when making assessments of applicants?**

6 months (0%) More than 2 years (31%)

1 year (13%) More than 5 years (18%)

2 years (33%)

**20. How far back do you hold accessible records of tenancies?**

6 months (3%) 2 years (8%) More than 5 years (33%)

1 year (13%) More than 2 years (38%) Q33. Do you attend Landlord Forums organised by Hartlepool Borough Council?

Never (13%) Sometimes (33%) Never heard of them (10%)

Rarely (15%) Always (15%)

**21 Are you a member of (tick all that apply)**

Hartlepool Landlord Accreditation Scheme (46%)

**22 How many properties do you own or manage?**

1 (3%) 6 - 10 (10%) 21 - 50 (18%) Prefer not to say (0%)

2 - 5 (3%) 11 - 20 (8%) 51 or more (49%)

**23 Where did you hear about the GTS?**

Landlord Forum (46%) Safer Hartlepool Website (5%) Citizens Advice Bureau (5%)

Colleague (5%) Safer Hartlepool Supplement (0%) Hartlepool Borough Council Website

(3%) Residents Association (5%) Heartbeat Hartlepool Housing Advice Team

(Hartlepool Borough Council) (21%) Ken Natt (5%).

**24 Landlords in Selective Licensing areas of Hartlepool are required to take references from their tenants**

**before granting tenancies. Do you own property in the Selective Licensing Area? (if you answered "don't**

**know" please check with the Selective Licensing Team on 01429 284333)**

Yes (51%) No (26%) Don't know (10%)

**25 If the amount of arrears is important, what figure would you say is significant rent arrears?**

More than £100 (28%) More than £200 (36%) More than £500 (21%) More than £800 (0%) More than £1000 (0%)

**26 If knowing about previous rent arrears are important to you, how much arrears do you think is important?**

Less than 2 weeks (23%) More than 2 weeks but less than 8 weeks (38%) I would prefer to know how the arrears accrued (31%)

8 weeks or more (10%)

**Lastly, is there anything you would change or any other comments you would like to make about the Good Tenant Scheme?**

it should offer an insurance scheme for landlord in case of damaged property or rent arrears, reference scheme should

protect the landlord (3%)

**Which of the following statements do you most agree with?**

I think the Good Tenant Scheme is helping to reduce anti-social behaviour (33%)

I do not think it will make any difference (8%)

I don't believe anti-social behaviour is a matter for landlords (0%)

App 7 – Applicants' Survey

**Q1. Why did you apply to join the Good Tenants Scheme (GTS)? (Tick all that apply)**

I believe it is a good idea-(51%)

My current landlord suggested it-(14%)

The landlord of a property I was interested in insisted I join-(19%)

I believe being a member would help me find a-property (34%)

I believe being able to show I was a good tenant would-enable me to get a better property (37%)

I was having problems with my landlord and wanted to move-(3%)

Other family problems (2%)

**Q2. When did you apply to the scheme?(Please tick one)**

When I heard about it (41%)

After I found a new property (17%)

Before I started looking for a new property (20%)

After I had problems with my current landlord (14%)

Other after i had problems (2%)

**Q3. How easy was it to get a Good Tenants Card?**

(Please tick one)

Simple and easy (76%)

Complicated (3%)

Neither easy or complicated (7%)

I never completed the process (2%)

**Q4. If you answered you never completed the process in the previous question, why was that?**

(Please tick all that apply)

Too much hassle, couldn't be bothered (0%)

The move I had planned fell through (0%)

My partner applied and I moved with them (3%)

I knew I would not qualify because of my past history (3%)

I knew my landlord would not give me a good reference (2%)

I found a property with a landlord who was not bothered about taking references (2%)

property management did it for me (2%)

I decided not to move (3%) Other

Q5. How long did the process take? (Please tick one)

Quite fast (69%) A long time (25%) Too long (3%)

Q6. Did processing time effect your plans to move? (Please tick one)

No (86%)

Yes, it took more than a fortnight (8%)

Yes, it took less than a fortnight (2%)

Don't know (3%)

Q7. Do you think not having a Good Tenant Scheme

card makes it harder to get a tenancy?

(Please tick one)

Yes (47%) No (17%) Don't know (36%)

Q8. Do you think a Good Tenant Scheme card helps you get a tenancy? Please tick one)

Yes (71%)

No (5%)

Don't know (20%)

Q9. Do you think your Good Tenants Scheme status has affected the standard of the house you now live in?

(Please tick one)

Yes - I got a better property with a better landlord (14%)

No - It makes no difference (44%)

Yes - I got a worse property with a worse landlord (2%)

Don't know (34%)

Q10. Knowing that landlords are now encouraged to take references and use the Good Tenants Scheme, would that make you think more about how you behaved and managed your home in future? (Please tick one)

Yes (24%)

Don't know (3%)

No (2%)

No - I'm already a good tenant and a good neighbour (68%)

Q11. We think the following are important in being a good Neighbour and a good tenant: do you agree?

. Not allowing criminal activity including illegal drugs use in your property? (Please tick one)

Don't Care (0%) Strongly Agree (90%) Agree (10%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%)

. Paying rent on time? (Please tick one)

Don't Care (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Agree (80%) Agree (17%)

Not playing music or making excessive noise late at night? (Please tick one)

Strongly Agree (83%) Agree (15%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%)

Keeping house and garden tidy? (Please tick one)

Strongly Agree (80%) Agree (20%) Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%)

Treating Neighbours with consideration and respect? (Please tick one)

Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Don't Care (0%) Strongly Agree (81%) Agree (15%)

Not Allowing Criminal Activity in your house? (Please tick one)

Disagree (0%) Strongly Disagree (0%) Agree (12%) Don't Care (0%) Strongly Agree (88%)

**Q12. How far back do you think we should look when deciding if someone has been a good tenant and a good neighbour? (Please tick one)**

3 Years (29%) 1 Year (29%) 2 Years (17%) 5 Years (25%)

**Q13. How long should you need to have a tenancy before you qualify as a good tenant? (Please tick one)**

6 Months (39%) 1 Year (41%) 2 Years (17%)

**Q14. Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (Please tick one)**

I think the Good Tenant Scheme is helping to reduce anti-social behaviour (41%)

I think the Good Tenant Scheme will help reduce anti-social behaviour (47%)

I do not think it will make any difference (10%)

I don't care about reducing anti-social behaviour (0%)

**Q15. Where did you hear about the Good Tenant Scheme? (Please tick one)**

Current landlord (17%)

Residents Association (0%)

Safer Hartlepool Supplement (0%)

Hartbeat (2%)

Hartlepool Housing Advice Team (7%)

Landlord of a property I wanted to move to (17%)

Safer Hartlepool Website (0%)

Hartlepool Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (0%)

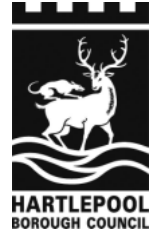
Citizens Advice Bureau (32%)

Word of mouth (15%)

Other estate agent (3%)

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOUSING  
PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder  
14 May 2010



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)

**Subject:** EMPLOYEES IN TIED ACCOMMODATION AND THE COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY

---

**SUMMARY**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To obtain Portfolio Holder ratification of the local amendments (Hartlepool only) to the Tees Valley Common Allocation Policy in respect of employees in tied accommodation who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The report provides details of the current provisions contained within the Tees Valley Common Allocation Policy in respect of employees residing in tied accommodation and the amendments to be implemented locally for those employees who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. These amendments have been identified following the Tied Accommodation Review by Human Resources and from part of the Single Status Agreement.

**3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

Corporate Housing issues

**4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non key

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Portfolio meeting only

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

To ratify the following local (Hartlepool only) amendments to the Tees Valley Common Allocations Policy in respect of employees residing in tied accommodation and who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010;

- Band 1 priority status will be awarded to those affected employees when they receive formal notice that their employment and or their tied accommodation is terminating.
- Extended notice periods can be negotiated by mutual agreement with the employer and the band 1 priority status will be activated on receipt of formal notification of the agreed date.



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)

**Subject:** EMPLOYEES IN TIED ACCOMMODATION AND THE COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY

---

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To obtain Portfolio Holder ratification of the local amendments (Hartlepool only) to the Tees Valley Common Allocation Policy in respect of employees in tied accommodation who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Tees Valley Common Allocation Policy governs the sub regional Compass Choice Lettings scheme and was approved by Cabinet prior to implementation in July 2009. Applicants to the Compass scheme are assessed according to the Common Allocation Policy and placed in one of four bands according to their housing needs; this band status is used to prioritise the resulting shortlists of applicants bidding for advertised vacancies of social housing throughout the Tees Valley

2.2 Within the scheme provision is made to assist employees of the partner organisations living in tied accommodation by awarding them band 3 status and for those employees that would then be classed as homeless and in priority need under the homeless legislation they would be elevated to band 1.

2.3 The sub regional partners to the Tees Valley Common Allocation Policy are currently undertaking a full review of the policy and its first year of implementation and although we can't pre-empt what will come out of the consultation our sub regional colleagues do not expect to require any amendments to the policy in respect of tied accommodation. However the overall policy does allow for limited local variations to some aspects of the policy.

2.4 As part of the Single Status Agreement the Council and Trade Unions party to the agreement agreed to undertake a wide ranging review of tied accommodation arrangements for Council employees by March 2010. The scope of this review included the arrangements for assistance with alternative accommodation when an employee is no longer employed and/or required to reside in the tied accommodation.

2.5 The tied accommodation review affects 18 buildings and the employees required to live in those buildings and this list is attached as **Confidential Appendix 1. This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 namely, information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority (paragraph 4).**

### 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 During the review of tied accommodation it was discovered that many of the school caretakers believed that they would be offered alternative accommodation at the end of their employment, as a priority over other applicants on the waiting list and on a like for like basis to their tied accommodation.
- 3.2 Although there is no written evidence or clause within their contract of employment to this effect it has been accepted by the review that a 'gentleman's agreement' was in place to provide assistance with rehousing. The review of tied accommodation and the amendments to the Single Status Agreement identifies in detail the provisions for employees living in tied accommodation and for new employees these comply with the existing terms of the Common Allocations Policy.
- 3.3 In order to honour the 'gentleman's agreement' for existing employees living in tied accommodation it is necessary to apply a local variation to the Common Allocations Policy for Hartlepool that will only affect those employees living in tied accommodation and who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.
- 3.4 It is not proposed to offer accommodation on a like for like basis as that could result in significant under occupation but accommodation of a suitable type and size for the applicants needs will be offered and in accordance with Common Allocations Policy.

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ratify the following local (Hartlepool only) amendments to the Tees Valley Common Allocations Policy in respect of employees residing in tied accommodation and who commenced their employment prior to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010;
- Band 1 priority status will be awarded to all affected employees when they receive formal notice that their employment and or their tied accommodation is terminating.

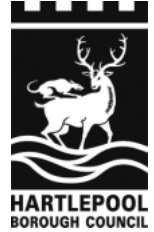
- Extended notice periods can be negotiated for these employees by mutual agreement with the employer and the band 1 priority status will be activated on receipt of formal notification of the agreed date.

## 5. CONTACT OFFICER

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**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOUSING  
PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder  
14 May 2010



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhood

**Subject:** REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES  
DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2009/10 – QUARTER  
4 MONITORING REPORT

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**SUMMARY**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10 to the end of the fourth quarter of the year.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The progress against the actions and contained in the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10.

**3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for performance management issues in relation to Community Safety, Housing and some other functions described within the Regeneration and Planning Departmental Plan.

**4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key.

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Portfolio Holder meeting 14 May 2010.

**6. DECISION REQUIRED**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:

- Note the progress of key actions along with the latest position with regard to risks.

**Report of:** Director of Neighbourhood Services

**Subject:** REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES  
DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2009/10 – 4TH  
QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10 to the end of the fourth quarter of the year.





## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for performance management issues in relation to Community Safety, Housing and some other functions described within the Regeneration and Planning Departmental Plan.
- 2.2 The Departmental Plan sets out the key tasks and issues along with an Action Plan to show what is to be achieved by the department in the coming year.
- 2.3 The Council's Covalent performance management system is used for collecting and analysing performance data in relation to both the Corporate Plan and Departmental Plans. The system is also used to monitor Risk Management across the council as part of the Performance Management Framework.
- 2.4 Where appropriate more detailed service plans are also produced detailing how each individual section contributes to the key tasks and priorities contained within the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan and ultimately those of the Corporate Plan. These plans are managed within the department.

## **3. FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE**





- 3.1 This section looks in detail at how the Department has performed in relation to the key actions that were included in the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10
- 3.2 On a quarterly basis officers from across the department are requested, to provide an update on progress against every action contained in the performance plans.

3.3 Officers are asked to provide a short commentary explaining progress made to date, and asked to traffic light each action based on whether or not the action will be, or has been, completed by the target date set out in the plans. The traffic light system is: -

-  Completed
-  On track
-  Progress acceptable
-  Intervention required

3.4 Within the Departmental Plan there are a total of 79 Actions for which the Portfolio Holder has responsibility. Table 1, below, summarises the progress made, to the 31 March 2010, towards achieving these actions.

Table1 – Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10 progress summary

	Departmental Plan	
	Actions	Percentage
	76	96%
	0	0%
	1	1%
	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	79	100%

3.5 It can be seen from the above table, that 96% (76) of the actions have been completed within timescales

3.6 One of the actions, CORP HO07.1 – Produce service level agreement with Housing Hartlepool, has been highlighted as ‘progress acceptable’ as although this has not been completed within the specified time, officers within the Council have progressed the action as far as possible and are awaiting agreement by Housing Hartlepool in order to fully complete the action.

3.7 The remaining 2 actions have not been able to be completed as planned and it is therefore proposed to include them within the 2010/11 Service plans. The table below details the actions that have not been completed as planned:

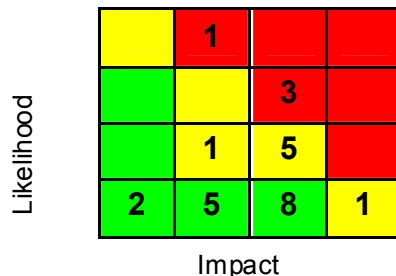
Action Code	Action Title	Due Date	Reason
CORP EN01.2	Progress the development/adoption of DPD’s and SPD’s identified in the Local development Scheme	31 March 2010	Although the development / adoption of DPD’s and SPD’s has been progressed by officers as anticipated, recent advice from the Government Office is to merge the document with the Core Strategy. This aspect is now

Action Code	Action Title	Due Date	Reason
			being considered and a recommendation will be made to Cabinet Summer 2010. The Publication stage therefore is likely to be delayed or abandoned.
CORP HO05.1	Review the impact of Choice based lettings on vulnerable people	31 March 2010	Initial delays with software development has put back implementation of CBL to July 2009, with 6 months of operation needed to inform overall review, this action forms part of overall review of both the sub regional allocations policy and CBL. Further delays have been encountered due to the impact of stock transfer consultation by our sub regional colleagues at Stockton. CBL system has agreed to delay the commencement of consultation until July.

3.8 A separate report detailing the progress of the Performance indicators included within the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2009/10 will be included in a comprehensive year end Performance report that will be produced once all performance indicator outturn figures are available. It is expected that this report will be produced in July 2010.

3.9 It is the policy of Hartlepool Council to take an active and pragmatic approach to the management of risks that could prevent the achievement of corporate and departmental objectives. On a quarterly basis responsible officers assess the risks identified within the Department's Risk Register.

3.10 As reported in previous Quarters, three 'red' risks exist in relation to the housing service and arise from the difficulties which exist in the current climate in relation to meeting local need and obtaining the required levels of funding. A further 'red' risk exists in relation to achieving the financial target set for Planning and Building Control fee income during the economic recession. Appropriate control measures are in place to manage these risks.



**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Portfolio Holder is requested to:

- Note the progress of key actions along with the latest position with regard to risks.

**5. CONTACT OFFICER**

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