

REPORT

To: COATBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
From: HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES			
Date: 19 January 2016	Ref: EMCh/DD		

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline the policy and procedures in relation to the letting of homes in North Lanarkshire and maintenance of smoke alarms on all Council owned houses.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Coatbridge Area Committee on 20 October 2015, a question was raised as to the allocation of a house to particular individual following incidents of fire raising within the common block.
- 2.2 There is no evidence to suggest that the individual identified by neighbours was in any way involved in fire raising at this or any other location and Police Scotland has confirmed that no action has been or will be taken against this tenant who remains living in his house. Furthermore, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has no information which would identify the perpetrators of the fire in the bin store area of this block. Confirmation can also be given that there are no records held that confirm that this individual has been involved in fire-raising or anti social behaviour prior to moving into the current home.
- 2.3 Coatbridge Area Committee, as a result of this incident of fire-raising, requested information in relation to the letting of houses to applicants with a history of anti social behaviour.

3. House Letting

- 3.1 When a person wishes to apply for a tenancy of a house within North Lanarkshire Council area, it is necessary to complete an application form which will then be assessed and the details placed within an appropriate waiting list on the Common Housing Register (CHR).
- 3.2 The applicant completing the form will submit details to confirm identity and background information in relation to their current health and housing situation which will allow an assessment of the applicant's needs to be carried out. Relevant checks are carried out including the conduct of any previous tenancies. The application will be awarded an appropriate level of points and placed on the relevant waiting list. The council has four categories of waiting list: Transfer, Aspirational Transfer, General and Homeless.
- 3.3 As and when houses become available for letting, a decision is taken as to the most suitable waiting list from which the best placed applicant should be chosen. This process involves reviewing the percentage of all lets from each of the four waiting categories.

- 3.4 Before an offer of housing is finally made to an applicant, further checks are carried out, for example on the condition of their current house or to ensure that the applicant is not presently involved in any unacceptable anti social behaviour.
- 3.5 The council does, however, have a duty of care to any tenant considered vulnerable who requires an element of support to ensure their tenancy is managed and sustained satisfactorily. This support is provided by Housing and Social Work Services staff and partner agencies.

4. Annual Fire Safety Checks

- 4.1 The Area Committee also requested information in relation to the annual fire safety checks within Council housing stock. All houses with a gas supply have gas equipment serviced on an annual basis and this service visit also includes a check and maintenance, if required, of the smoke alarm. All houses with an electrical supply only also receive an annual visit to ensure the smoke alarm is working properly.
- 4.2 In addition, colleagues within Fire & Rescue offer free safety checks to individual tenants and have also carried out assessments within our sheltered housing stock to give advice and assistance to our more vulnerable elderly tenants.
- 4.3 Housing Services and Fire & Rescue have also worked in partnership to assist tenants within tower blocks to give advice and assistance in relation to potential fire risks.

5. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial, personnel, legal or policy implications

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Coatbridge Area Committee note the content of the report.



Elaine McHugh
Head of Housing Services
8 December 2015