

Appendix B

Key findings report

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Housing Services
Council Housing Estate Management Policy
Public Consultation

Date of report : 12 December 2016
Report author : Henk Jan Kuipers
Housing Service Improvement Officer

1. Key Findings and conclusion

The respondents give support to the policy. They find it easy to read. No one indicates that the policy discriminates.

The comments and questions that were made have not lead to any changes in the policy.

2. Background

2.1. Background to the policy and purpose of consultation

The Council's Housing Service (the Council) is landlord of 5,400 Council homes, 110 leasehold flats and 2,000 garages. This policy describes how the Council will manage its estates, including hardscaped and landscaped areas, as well as the communal areas in buildings in mainly blocks of flats.

The policy also describes how the Service maintains and improves the living environment on estates.

The consultation enabled Housing staff, tenant representatives and external stakeholders to provide comments.

2.2. Background to the consultation and engagement

Prior to the public consultation a draft policy was discussed with members of the Tenants' Liaison Forum's Housing Policies Sub-Group. The members are experienced in giving feedback on policies and recommendations on improving Housing services.

The proposed policy and a survey response form were sent to:

- all Housing staff
- Heads of Service
- Tenants' Liaison Forum members
- Housing Services Group 100

The following external stakeholders have been sent the proposed policy and response form:

- Powys Teaching Health Board
- PAVO
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Disability Powys
- Age Cymru Powys
- Shelter Cymru
- Tai Pawb
- Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru

In addition the consultation was advertised on the Powys County Council Tenant Engagement Facebook page.

There was a four week response period.

The consultation process was agreed with the Corporate Consultation Officer.

2.3. Response rate

Nine completed questionnaires have been received. Eight are from Council tenants, one from a County Councillor.

Although the response numbers are relatively small, there is no indication additional responses would have highlighted any additional issues.

2.4. Profile data

Gender

Female	7
Male	2
Other	0

Age

Under 18	0
18-35 years	0
35-59 years	3
60 or over	6

Disability

day-to-day activities limited a lot	3
day-to-day activities limited a little	1
day-to-day activities not limited	5

Welsh

Speak only	2
Combination of speak, read or write	0
No Welsh skills	7

The response numbers are small, but it stands out no people under the age of 35 have responded.

2.5. A note about market research and consultations

When conducting market research companies use a margin of error and confidence level to ensure that their results are robust and representative of the population they are seeking views from. (I.e. the population of interest).

A consultation however isn't market research as people choose to respond and are not contacted using a sampling methodology. People self-select so sometimes when conducting a consultation you only hear the views of the people who are either strongly in favour or strongly object to a proposal. The silent majority may not have given a view. However when we analyse any consultation results we do consider how robust they are in terms of the population of interest.

When conducting consultation exercise Powys County Council works to the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales.

<http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles>

3. Question by question analysis

Question 1: Do you find the policy easy or difficult to understand?

Answers

easy	9
difficult	0

Question 2: Please tell us if you find anything unclear

Question 3: Do you feel there is something missing in the policy? Does anything needs changing?

The following comments and questions regarding the content were received. Below each comment or question the Council's Housing Service response.

- A. 7.3: Quite a few untaxed vehicles are parked on estate car parks. How do you police it?

Response

Aany member of the public can check on line on the DVLA website if a vehicle is taxed or declared SORN. Suspected untaxed vehicles on the public road can be reported to the DVLA. The DVLA can clamp and remove vehicles in certain instances.

If the DVLA is not undertaking action, Housing staff can be informed and ask the vehicle owner to remove the vehicle if it remains untaxed. If the vehicle owner does not tax or move the vehicle, the Housing Service may remove the vehicle at the owner's expense. Housing staff will not actively check if all vehicles are taxed.

- B. 7.4.d. Very common to see vehicle repairs being done by people who do not own a vehicle. How is this policed?

Response

Housing staff will respond to complaints and if staff conclude the repairs are a nuisance they will ask the vehicle owner to end the nuisance. If the nuisance continues, staff will discuss with the Civil Enforcement Officer how the nuisance can be stopped.

- C. 8.3: no mention or provision of pest infestation coming from PCC land and then infesting tenants' home or garden. Who is responsible?

Response

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health website states:

"Local authorities (councils) are not legally required to provide a pest control service, however, under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 they are required to take such steps as may be necessary to secure as far as practicable that their district is kept free from rats and mice. They must, in particular, keep the local authority's own land, and other land that the local authority occupies, free from rats and mice. They are also required to ensure that other owners and occupiers of land comply with their similar duties under the Act and, in addition, to tell the local authority in writing if it comes to their knowledge that rats or mice are living on or resorting to their land in substantial numbers. (NB. This does not apply to agricultural land.)".

The Environmental Health Service of the Council should be consulted if the infestation persists.

If there is a disrepair to the property allowing the infestation it is the Housing Services' responsibility, otherwise an infestation is the tenant's responsibility.

- D. 8.3. a+b: no mention on pre-existing historic issues due to brook/culvert running underneath properties. Senior Management guaranteed treatment at PCC expense any rat infestation is a health risk wherever it is or who tenant is.

Response

If there is a disrepair to the property allowing the infestation it is the Housing Services' responsibility, otherwise an infestation is the tenant's responsibility. This policy does not change previous agreements regarding individual tenants and the Service.

- E. 9. This paragraph should also mention breeding. There are tenants who breed dogs and cats for profit, plus some too idle too spay.

Response

Pets should not cause a nuisance to others, or a health hazard, or damage to Council property or lead to unsanitary conditions in and around the premises. The tenancy agreement states that written permission is needed to keep more than one dog or two cats. Where issues are raised with Housing staff they will investigate and take appropriate steps if necessary.

- F. 9.3: Many years ago verbal permission was given not written.

Response

The Service have introduced a clear procedure in March 2016. Verbal permission will never be given. If issues arise from tenant's works carried out in the past, they will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld and there will be conditions attached to permission.

G. 9.4: Who do you report breaches to? Needs department adding.

Response

Potential breaches of tenancies are normally investigated by the Housing Management & Options Officer. Staff that deals with the public knows which officer is responsible. The public can phone the Housing phone line or contact the Housing Service by e-mail or via a letter.

H. 12.2.b: Another table or statement should be included which deals with Council tenants who rent a private garage and who request a Council garage for this vehicle or a second vehicle.

Response

The Service will not take into account if applicants for a garage already rent a garage not owned by the Service. The Service is not able to monitor and check this in a consistent way.

I. 13.2.c iii: what is terrier?

Response

The asset terrier is the corporate database of all land and properties the Council owns.

Question 4: If you think our policy does discriminate or puts a person at a disadvantage compared to another person we would like to hear your views.

The Housing Service wants to be fair to everyone and not discriminate anyone. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

No responses were recorded, other than that there would be no discrimination.