

S23. Standards of Gardens for Re-letting Properties

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on the standard of gardens for re-letting properties. The report provided information on the voids standard; inspection criteria for gardens and common areas, and other works undertaken in gardens and common areas. Kenny Gillespie provided an overview of the report.

The committee asked for information about fencing around divisible space. Kenny Gillespie stated that the service were now installing dividing fences where possible and boxing in front gardens. Further work was required on this area to include back gardens. Over £1.5m had been spent on fencing and cases would be looked at individually where raised.

Members commented on the positives which came from using stones, gravel or chips and the removal of bushes. It was felt this was better for the long term as the gardens were easier to maintain.

The committee asked about the location of new pilot projects. Kenny Gillespie stated that there were two Grangemouth projects ongoing which should bring significant improvements and feel different for the tenants.

Members asked what happens where tenants leave an item such as a garden shed which is then not wanted by the incoming tenants and if the service charged the previous tenants in such circumstances. Kenny Gillespie stated that this was covered in the exit conversation and that if assets were in good condition the service could take ownership of them.

The committee, highlighting that tenants sign a missive to accept tenancy, asked how long term issues of poor garden maintenance were dealt with. Kenny Gillespie stated that if tenants do not comply with their conditions then they can be suspended from the allocations process. It was possible that after due process that the service could carry out garden tidying works and then charge the tenant and chase the debt. There was a dedicated team to chasing debts and the service tried its best to recoup funds. Direct intervention was preferred by the service and had led to a number of successes.

Members asked about the upkeep required to maintain fencing. Kenny Gillespie stated that the fences were pressure impregnated and would last for 7 to 8 years without a need to re-do them.

The committee asked that details of the pilot work were circulated to members; Kenny Gillespie confirmed that this would be done.

Decision

The committee noted the position regarding the standard of gardens when re-letting properties.