

Housing Management & Environment Officer Quarterly report to Area Council

Written report:

I have seen a change over the past three months as lockdown has eased and people are out and about more, I have also been able to be out and about more in our communities meeting people and I am now back working in XXX Police station which allows good joint working with the neighbourhood team based there. This has resulted in a large increase in workload, predominantly waste in gardens which is in turn leading to information regarding disrepair in properties. As people have been in lockdown, with limited access by tradesmen, I am regularly finding properties that do not have current gas safety certificates or electric checks. Cases are therefore becoming more complex due to the multitude of issues that have developed over lockdown within each property. I have continued to work closely with colleagues in Berneslai Homes and walkabouts are now back on and I have been on 5 so far with Housing officers and elected members, mainly XXX wards . Other ward areas are coming up over the next couple of months . This has resulted in 39 interactions with both private rented and owner occupier properties with issues mainly seen being waste in gardens or advice and support.

I have continued intensive work on XXX Terrace, and have completed inspections of all 16 properties, with landlords now completing the required works. A day of action is planned in the next couple of weeks where Twigg's and community members will join me to complete the final stages of weeding and cleaning up as well as fitting CCTV. One landlord was issued a notice resulting in the area being fly tipped on now being fenced off and cleared. Tenants are really pleased and support the work I have been doing. That combined with CCTV will hopefully reduce and eliminate the fly tipping problems around these properties. A bin audit allowed me to advise tenants regarding their waste and recycling facilities and to educate them on the use of these and all contaminated bins have now been collected which has made a big improvement to the area. I'm also working on XXRoad/XXX Street area due to waste and fly tipping issues.

The XXX Street and surrounding areas of XXXX is also a regular area I am working in. A bin audit has resulted in advice to residents and tenants and the collection of contaminated bins. Recently a fly tipping case occurred in broad daylight on the footpath in the residential area. A local resident informed me straight away and so I attended and cordoned the area off. I then contacted neighbourhood services who attended straight away and organised collection of the hazardous materials that had been fly tipped. The investigation is ongoing to prosecute the offenders. See attached photo.

Whilst out and about in XXX ward I was approached by a member of the public enquiring about using a piece of land for a community garden. Enquiries are ongoing and hopefully next quarter I will be able to update with news of the garden progressing.

I have recently come across a tenant who I am now working with. An overgrown garden resulted in me speaking with tenants in 3 properties, one empty private rent, one Berneslai Homes and the other occupied private rent. The private sector tenant has issues of disrepair in the property and I am currently getting the landlord involved to ensure that the property is up to standard and supporting the tenant with financial difficulties and mental health issues.

I continue to work closely with CAB and regularly refer cases to them or speak to them for general advice, they also contact me with referrals and clients they are involved with who need support.

I recently met online with Twigg's and we now have a number of projects and clean ups planned over the summer. They have recently attended 2 jobs in XXX and XXX I look forward to working with them regularly.

Being back in the office allows me to liaise closely with the Police and share valuable information regarding tenants, properties and addresses. Without a full picture of agencies involved cases would not have such successful outcomes.

CASE STUDY 1:

An elected member contacted me to say they had been contacted by a tenant who was having disrepair issues in the property and didn't know what to do as her landlord lived abroad. He was refusing to answer her emails and she had no other way of contacting him. She had pigeons roosting in her loft and other disrepair issues.

I attended and completed an inspection of the property, the main issue was that there had been no maintenance at the property, in particular the roof was in a very bad condition leading to leaks and pigeons roosting in the loft. The ceiling in the bedroom where the pigeons were roosting had collapsed into the bedroom resulting in the faeces all falling onto the carpet. There was no gas safety certificate, no tenancy agreement and no electrical safety certificate. The house was in a really poor condition and the tenant and her young family didn't know where to turn. My initial contact was with the landlord's grandson, however once the scale of the problems was realised the landlord took over dealing with the issues. Being in Thailand has meant limited contact via email and as a result of no progression in terms of dealing with the pigeons I served an Environmental Protection Notice on the landlord requiring he complete the works within a month. The landlord arranged a plasterer to fix the bedroom ceiling however it was done to such a poor standard that droppings continue to fall through the gap at the edge of the ceiling. As I write,

the notice has expired and the work is nearing completion. Pest control have removed around 300 dead pigeons, loft insulation and bags and bags of waste. The tenant is still living there throughout the works and it has caused a great deal of stress and anxiety for her.



CASE STUDY 2:

An end terraced property came to my attention as there was an accumulation of waste at the side. On speaking with the tenant it became apparent that she had a vermin problem in the property, specifically downstairs in the kitchen. They were accessing under the sink and through lose skirting board (see pictures below) We discussed the rear garden and she was advised to remove the pile of burnt cans, sofa and to clean up the garden and yard area. The tenant disclosed she was struggling financially as she had lost her job and was unsure how to claim benefits or find another job. I contacted the landlord and completed an inspection of the property and the landlord carried out all required works. I then spoke to CAB and did a referral for support with benefits and income. I also got the tenant a regular food parcel and contacted the Salvation Army who supported the tenant with gas and electricity payments. Twigg's came out and cleared the area around the property, weeding and clearing litter that was onto the highway. This made it look a lot cleaner resulting in less people throwing litter down. All tenants on the row were leaving their bins out after being emptied which

looked unsightly and was resulting in members of the public using the bins and contaminating them. On speaking with one tenant she claimed she could not access her rear garden with the bin. After speaking with all landlords and tenants everyone was aware of the access rights. A letter drop was completed along the row advising tenants of the waste and recycling responsibilities along with my details for any issues either in their properties or with the bins.

As a result of my input the tenant has sorted out Universal Credit payments and is looking for new employment, there is no more vermin getting into the property and it is in much safer condition. The overall well-being of the tenant has massively improved. I have recently been asked to support the tenants' parent who is also struggling with disrepair issues and am in the process of working with them also. After noting the state of this particular garden the other gardens in the row are also now being targeted for improvement and tenants being contacted regarding disrepair. The entire row of tenants are now taking their bins back to their own gardens once emptied allowing them to use them properly.

Other work completed this quarter.



Fly tipping of contaminated Asbestos sheeting and household waste – cleared within 2 hours of reportin