**Proposed changes to the Tenancy Policy and Tenancy and Rent Strategy**

**Table 1: Reverting to using secure (lifetime) tenancies and removing the use of flexible fixed term tenancies in most instances**

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| **Change:** to issue secure (lifetime) periodic tenancies to new tenants and to only use flexible fixed term tenancies when offering a property that has five bedrooms or more.  **Effect: this will ensure most of our tenants will have lifetime tenancies without the requirement to undertake a tenancy review.** |
| As of March 2013, the Council has been issuing new tenants with flexible fixed term tenancies (FFTT) where legislation has allowed. As of 2022, this has resulted in nearly 3000 tenants holding FFTTs.  A FFTT is a secure social housing tenancy, however, unlike tenants on lifetime tenancies, tenants with a FFTT are given a tenancy for a fixed period with a requirement for the tenancy to be reviewed in the last year of the FFTT to determine whether a new FFTT should be granted, or whether no tenancy should be issued.  Following a review of the effectiveness of FFTTs, the Council has decided that offering lifetime tenancies in the majority of cases provides the right level of stability for tenants. Most new applicants offered a Wandsworth Council social housing tenancy would therefore be offered a lifetime tenancy (preceded by a 12-month introductory tenancy).  This benefits new tenants since they would not be required to undertake any review into their tenancy and would have long term housing security.  Committing to using lifetime tenancies in most cases would also ensure that most tenants have the same tenancy type, reducing any disparities between those with lifetime tenancies and those with FFTTs.  The Tenancy Policy has been updated to reflect the use of lifetime tenancies in most cases, and the Tenancy and Rent Strategy has been updated to outline that the Council encourages registered providers of social housing to also use lifetime tenancies in most instances when making a social housing tenancy offer. |

**Table 2: Using FFTTs in exceptional circumstances**

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| **Change:** to only issue FFTTs when a household is offered a property that has five bedrooms or more.  **Effect:** **this will impact approximately only 1% of new Wandsworth Council social housing tenants and < 0.5% of existing Wandsworth Council social housing tenants on a FFTT, and will ensure the Council is able to make best use of its social housing stock.** |
| There is high demand for social housing properties of five bedrooms or more against a shortage of these properties. To ensure the Council is able to make best use of its stock and to reduce the need for larger properties, the Council will continue to issue FFTTs (where legislation allows) when making an offer of a property that has five bedrooms or more.  The length of time that FFTTs will be issued will not change as per the current practice, with new tenants being offered an initial ten year FFTT, and all subsequent tenancies will be five year FFTTs (or less). When a review period starts towards the end of the FFTT, the Council will work with the main tenant/s to determine whether the size of the property best meets their household’s need. During the review, if it is deemed that the property size still meets the needs of the household size, then the tenant/s would usually be offered another FFTT of five years at the same property. If there has been a change in the household size which results in the household under occupying the property, the Council will offer a new tenancy at a suitably sized property that meets the household’s needs in order that the larger property can be offered to a household in need of it. If the household downsizes to a property that is smaller than five bedrooms, they would be offered a lifetime tenancy.  The Tenancy Policy has been updated to reflect our use of offering FFTTs (to an existing tenant on a FFTT or a new tenant) on properties that are five bedrooms or larger. The Tenancy and Rent Strategy has been updated encouraging registered providers of social housing to only use FFTTs if the property offered (to existing tenants on FFTTs or to a new tenant) is five bedrooms or larger. |
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| **Change:** all eligible existing tenants on a FFTT that are occupying a property that is up to and including four bedrooms will be offered a lifetime tenancy or automatically issued with a lifetime tenancy when a current FFTT rolls on to becoming a secure periodic tenancy.  **Effect:** **most existing and eligible tenants on a FFTT being offered a lifetime tenancy while allowing housing officers to engage and assist tenants with outstanding rent arrears.** |
| As of August 2022, there are nearly 3000 tenants with FFTTs. Following changes to the Tenancy Policy and Tenancy and Rent Strategy, all tenants on a FFTT will be offered a lifetime tenancy if they are eligible based on the following criteria:   1. The tenant/s were granted a new or a subsequent flexible fixed term tenancy for a property that has 4-bedrooms or fewer, and the flexible fixed term tenancy was granted between 1st April 2013 to 30th November 2022; and 2. There are no ongoing actions being taken against the tenant/s for example for rent arrears and or / anti-social behaviour, which includes those served with a six month notice that the Council does not propose to grant a further tenancy when the fixed term expires or issued with a possession order or bailiff warrant.   If the tenant is occupying a property with up to four bedrooms and they owe rent arrears, then the Council will utilise the remaining time left on a tenant’s FFTT to encourage and assist the tenant through targeted support to clear or reduce their arrears in preparation for the granting of a lifetime tenancy.  In the event the tenant has been issued with possession proceedings for rent arrears and/or antisocial behaviour, or those served with a six month notice as set out in the Tenancy Policy when reviewing a FFTT, the Council will retain its right to continue with proceedings and to not offer a lifetime tenancy.  If an eligible tenant on a FFTT does not wish to accept an offer to surrender their FFTT so that a lifetime tenancy can be granted, then the tenant will remain on their FFTT until it expires. Once the FFTT expires, their tenancy will automatically be rolled onto a lifetime tenancy and the tenant will be notified of this in writing.  The Tenancy Policy has been updated to reflect our approach in reverting existing tenants on FFTTs to lifetime tenancies, and the Tenancy and Rent Strategy has been updated to encourage registered providers of social housing to revert their existing tenants on FFTTs to lifetime tenancies as per the approach outlined above. |