
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	26 th NOVEMBER 2015	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER – CHRIS HOLLOWAY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CHRIS HOLLOWAY (01283 595957) chris.holloway@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	UNTIDY GARDENS PROCEDURE	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HC 01

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Members approve the introduction of the untidy gardens procedure

2.0 Purpose of the Report

2.1 To give members an oversight of how the Housing Operations team intend to manage untidy gardens in the district.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Untidy gardens are a breach of the Council's tenancy agreement (clause 6 paragraph G) which states;

3.2 6 Behaviour of tenants

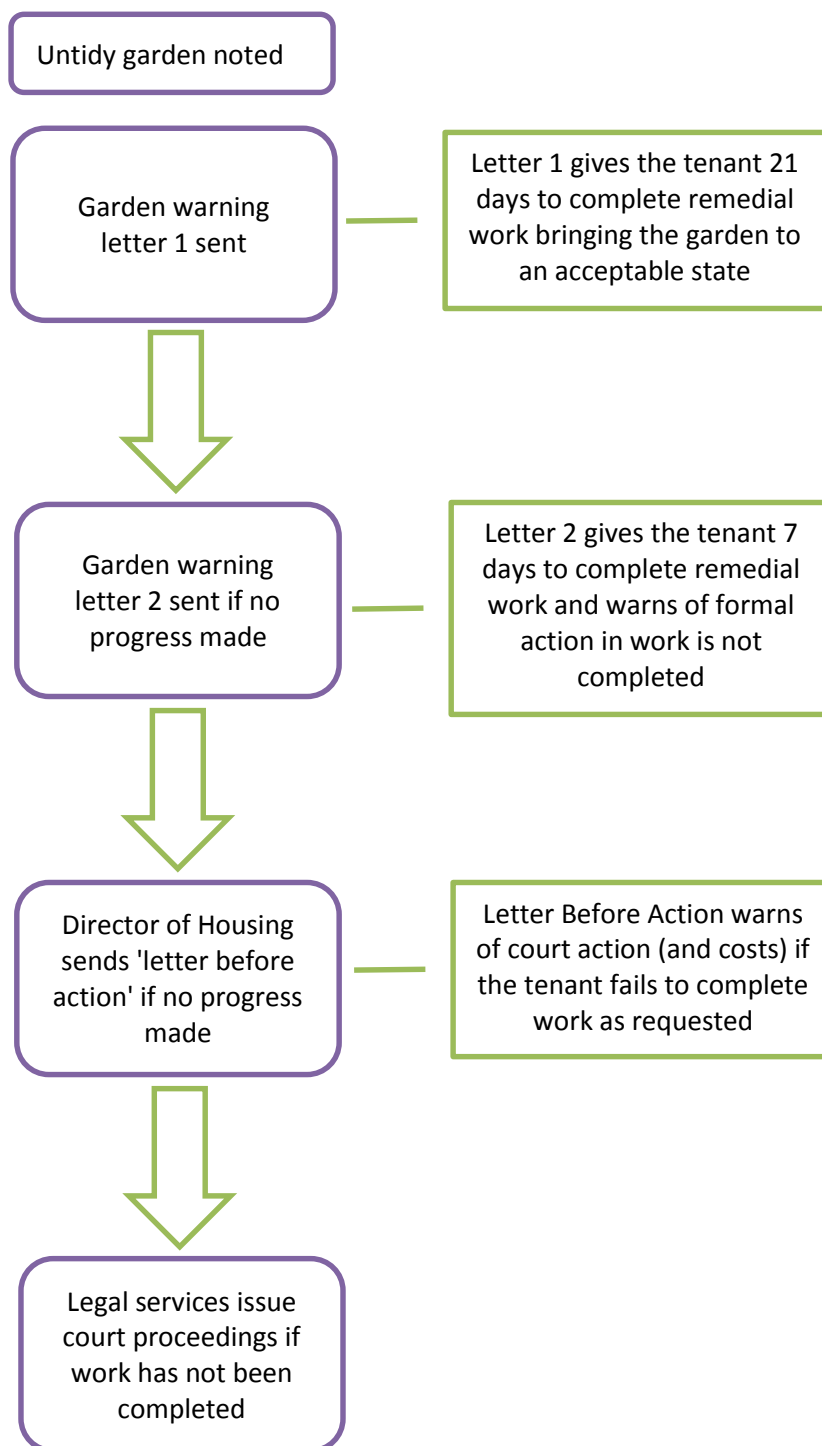
You, your partner or any member of the household, including lodgers, sub-tenants and visitors to the property, must:

g) care for the garden in a reasonable way and to a reasonable standard, including cutting back the hedges regularly.

3.3 Left unchecked, untidy gardens can make an estate look 'run down', attract anti-social behaviour and reduce an area's 'kerb appeal' meaning that vacant properties may become hard to let to new applicants.

3.4 The proposed untidy gardens procedure allows officers to fairly, yet robustly enforce the Council's tenancy agreement to keep our estates clean and tidy. The process map in section 3.5 details the procedure

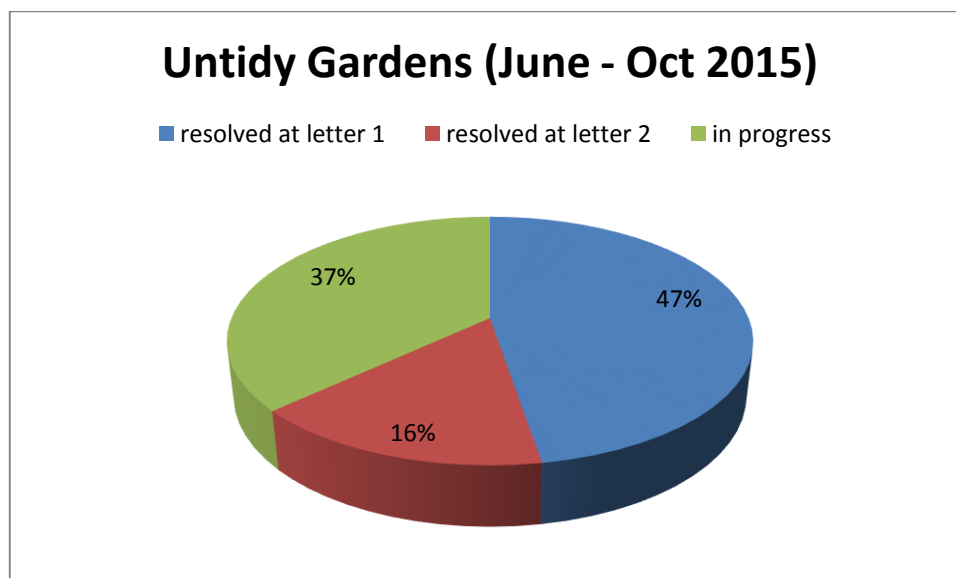
3.5 Untidy Garden Procedure 'Process Map'



3.6 The draft procedure has been circulated to colleagues in legal services who agree with its use and implementation

3.7 The procedure has been piloted in the district from June 2015 and the chart below illustrates the rate at which untidy gardens are rectified.

3.8 Chart to show rectification rate of untidy gardens (June 2015 – Oct 2015)



3.9 The chart above shows that 47% (9) of all cases are resolved at first intervention, whilst a further 16% (3) are resolved at the second stage. The remaining 37% (7) are live cases which are currently being managed by housing staff.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 Enforcing the terms of the tenancy agreement through the courts can be a costly process, and historically court costs, whilst passed on to the tenant, are not always paid in full.

4.2 However, the position noted in 3.8 shows that all closed cases have been resolved prior to resorting to legal action. Therefore it is estimated that future legal expense will not be excessive as the procedure directs housing staff to proactively manage cases on their patch.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Not applicable at present

6.0 Community Implications

6.1 Maintaining clean and tidy estates is a key aim of the Service and the Council. This process has been developed following feedback received from residents and elected members.