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NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of Motion by Councillor Diarmaid Ó Cadhla
for full Cork County Council Meeting on 8th October, 2018.

"Concerning our responsibilities under 'Minimum Standards' legislation Council requests up-to-date reporting as follows:

- 1. The total numbers of rental dwellings in our area, broken down by whether they are owned by Council, the different Approved Housing Bodies, HAP, RAS or otherwise.*
- 2. Number of inspections carried out on private rentals, including the Approved Housing Bodies during 2016, 2017 and year-to-date.*
- 3. Number of inspections carried out on our own properties in 2016, 2017 and year-to-date.*
- 4. What funds do we allocate to inspections from our own resource, and what funding is provided by Government/RTB, and what additional funds have been received towards achieving the 25% targeted annual inspection rate.*
- 5. The number of staff with responsibility for inspections, the guidelines for their work, and details of the schedule of planned inspections.*
- 6. What is the lead time to carry out an inspection from receipt of a complaint, and how many complaints were made in 2016, 2017 and year-to-date.*
- 7. Analysis of the failure reasons on properties that do not meet Minimum Standards.*
- 8. What enforcement actions have been taken by Council to ensure compliance.*

Noting the typically high levels on non-compliance and the inherent conflict of interest in Council being responsible for enforcement on itself, Council calls on the Minister to:

- 9. Establish a independent body, with presence in every county, charged with the monitoring and enforcement of compliance with the Minimum Standards in Rental Accommodation."*

Report:

1. Number of Properties
 - Council - 7466
 - HAP - 3207
 - RAS - 583
 - AHBs - 1431,
 - Unsold Affordable Units (Leased to AHBs) -739 .

18,835 Private in 2017

2. 756 inspections were carried out in 2016, 1152 in 2017 and 590 to date this year.
3. Cork County Council properties are inspected by technical staff on an ongoing basis as part of its Maintenance Service provision. The Council will be carrying out a Stock Survey from the end of 2018 during which every Council property will be inspected. The recruitment of staff to carry out this survey is underway.

733
Failed

4. A fee of €100 per inspection and €50 for a follow up inspection is paid by the Department. A sum of €116,800 was received in respect of inspection activity carried out in 2017. The shortfall in expenditure is funded from the Council's own resources. No specific additional funds have been provided by the Department towards the increased inspection targets but increased inspections will yield increased income from the overall inspection fund going forward.
5. 3 no. inspectors are currently employed at fire officer grade to carry out private rented inspections in Cork County. 30% of 2 of the inspectors' responsibilities are linked to Fire & Building Control. An additional 4 no. inspectors have been recruited at Clerk of Works grade to work on the private rented inspection programme. These staff will be in place shortly and will enable the Council to keep pace with the increased inspection targets set by the Department over the coming years. The inspections are carried out under the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017 and cover all private rental properties including in response to complaints as they arise. In general, inspections are grouped and arranged based on a geographical area in order to maximise the Inspectors time on a given day when carrying out inspections.
6. There is no set lead in time for carrying out inspections on foot of complaints received. A complaint form is issued to the tenant to arrange for completion and return. The inspections are generally prioritised and based on the nature/severity of the issue being highlighted by the complainant and are followed up accordingly.

Complaints received:

2016 Forms sent out 49, returned 30
 2017 Forms sent out 44, returned 23
 2018 Forms sent out 57, returned 37

Lead time?

*Others?
 - of 1152*

7. The highest number of instances of non-compliance in 2017 related to 578 inspections where the certification for Gas/Oil and Electricity was not available. Other reasons for non compliance related to Structure, Sanitary Facilities, Heating, Storage, Fire Safety, Ventilation, Refuse Facilities and Ventilation.
8. As regards enforcement action, Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices have been issued by the Council as follows:

Improvement Notices

2016 – 7
 2017 – 10
 2018 – 8

Prohibition Notices

2016 – 2
 2017 – 7
 2018 – 2

Analysis should include numbers!

Director of Services

Date: 8th September, 2018