



# TENANT NEWSLETTER

## ISSUE NO.1

### SPRING 2005

In this first edition of the Midlothian Tenant newsletter we have outlined some information on current work underway in the Council. Everything contained has a direct effect on you. See back page on how you can get involved!

#### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

TPAS would like to arrange a number of focus groups throughout Midlothian to get your views on how the Council currently informs and consults you and to find out how you would like to be involved in the future. To help us gather your views please complete and return the following short questionnaire to:

**Midlothian Council**  
**Buccleuch House**  
**White Hart Street**  
**Dalkeith**  
**Postcode**

Would you attend a local/tenants focus group meeting?     Yes     No

If yes where is the best place to meet? \_\_\_\_\_

And the best time and day of the week? \_\_\_\_\_

Your daytime telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_

No postage is required, please return by

This newsletter can be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information please contact Midlothian Council on ???

#### TACKLING ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN MIDLOTHIAN

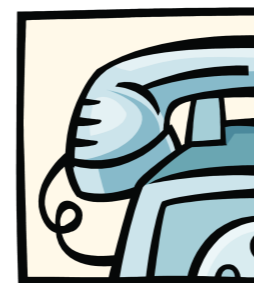
Midlothian Council has recently established an Anti Social Behaviour Team to reduce anti social behaviour across Midlothian and improve the quality of life for residents and those working in the area.

Anti social behaviour is an increasing problem for many communities and tackling it is a key priority for the Scottish Executive and the Council.

The team has been established for an initial 2 year period via funding from the Scottish Executive's "Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities".

Two Anti Social Behaviour Officers and a Police Officer are based in Buccleuch House, Dalkeith and work closely with Housing Officers, the Police and other agencies to tackle anti social behaviour across all sections of our community.

They will give advice on dealing with anti-social behaviour (including legal action) and investigate complaints.



They can be contacted  
**Monday to Thursday 9am-5pm**  
**and Friday 9am-3.45pm on**  
**0131 271 3390,**  
**0131 271 3392,**  
**or 0131 271 3393**

#### GOREBRIDGE COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE

Community Wardens provide a visible presence on the streets to deter anti social behaviour, increase community confidence and improve the environment by reporting faults such as defective lighting, fly tipping and vandalism. The pilot project is based in Gorebridge. It is hoped if the scheme is successful and funding is available wardens will be employed in other areas of Midlothian.



The team's office base is at **7 Park Road, Gorebridge**

E-mail - [Community-wardens@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Community-wardens@midlothian.gov.uk)

Telephone **01875 825683**

2 teams provide cover **7 days per week/365 days a year** between the hours of 3pm and 12 midnight.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Council has allocated £2.5million to support the delivery of our older people strategy which includes the re-provisioning of three care homes and the expansion of the existing community alarm scheme through the use of new technology.

The will provide aids to independent living that will:

- Allow individuals to perform tasks that an able bodied person would take for granted.
- Allow residents to live a more independent lifestyle safely and securely in their own home.

## ALLOCATING OUR HOUSES

Due to recent legal changes and a rise in homelessness the council is currently in the process of looking at how we allocate our houses.

The review of the allocation policy is intended to address pressures on the current system and will result in major changes to the way we allocate houses. For further information on how you can get involved please see Page 4 of this newsletter.



## 21st CENTURY HOMES

The Scottish Executive has recently introduced a new housing quality standard for council and housing associations homes. This standard must be met by 2015.

All Midlothian Council's homes must:

- meet the Scottish Tolerable Standard
- be free from serious disrepair
- be energy efficient
- be equipped with modern facilities and services such as modern kitchens and bathrooms
- be healthy, safe and secure

The Council will submit a detailed plan to the Scottish Executive by April 2005 which will set out how the Council will meet these standards.

The Council is presently calculating how many homes do not meet these requirements and how much it will cost for these homes to be improved to the required level by 2015. Existing homes that are currently in good condition will need to be surveyed to ensure that they will continue to meet the Standard in 2015.

**Once the Council has produced its plan for meeting the standard tenants will be informed of what this means in terms of future investment in their homes.**



## NEW COUNCIL HOMES BEING BUILT

Midlothian Council has stated the need to build an additional 1700 affordable homes in order to meet local housing need. In response to this the Council has decided to build 1000 new Council homes for rent over the next five years. Several sites have been identified for the first new houses and subject to getting planning permission the first new homes are likely to be available in 2005/2006.

The new homes will be built to a very high standard in terms of energy efficiency, security, space and accessibility. Some homes will be designed especially for tenants with special needs.

The Council is also working in partnership to increase the number of new homes for rent and sale by Housing Associations.

## YOUR VOICE COUNTS – GET INVOLVED!

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS) has been commissioned by Midlothian Council to help find out how the tenants of Midlothian Council want to be informed and consulted about the Housing Service they receive from The Council.

As part of this process we want to talk to tenants to find out what they think the strengths and weaknesses are of how Midlothian Council Housing informs and consults its tenants.

## TPAS?

TPAS is a long established voluntary organisation. Their aim is to increase the level and quality of tenant involvement in housing.

## CHANGES

In July 2001 a new Housing Act was introduced in Scotland. The Act gives you many more rights to information, consultation and taking part in the decisions that affect your home.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Midlothian Council are committed to ensuring that you are involved in the future direction of its housing services. There are many different ways you can get involved and give your views and there are many areas for involvement. The Council is keen to get your views on:

- What you want to get involved in
- How you want to get involved

