
REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 16
DATE OF MEETING:	10 TH JULY 2002	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	DAWN DAWSON (Ext. 5797)	DOC S:\Hsg_Lais\Admin\WP Myfiles\HOUSING\Dawn Dawson\Committee Report - Incentive to Move Scheme.doc
SUBJECT:	INCENTIVE TO MOVE SCHEME	REF: DD/LS
WARD(S) AFFECTED:		TERMS OF REFERENCE: CS 01

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members consider the pilot Incentive to Move Scheme and agree its implementation for a trial period. The scheme has been allocated an amount of £2,000
- 1.2 A further report detailing costs per move and family accommodation released via the scheme, will be presented to Members to consider the extension of the scheme once the pilot has been completed and the allocated amount has been committed.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To inform Members of the aims of the scheme.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Due to the increasing take up of the Right to Buy Scheme, the Council's housing stock has reduced to 3,601 properties, of which a third are classed as either Category 1 or Category 2 Sheltered Accommodation.
- 3.2 Of the properties classed as sheltered accommodation, 42 have been unoccupied for more than four weeks. This has resulted in a loss of rental income totalling £28,000 since 1st April 2002.
- 3.3 Currently, there are 403 households registered as requiring two, three or four bedroom accommodation in the district.
- 3.4 The 2001 Business Plan, stated the intent to reduce the amount of empty units in sheltered accommodation and address the issue of under-occupation in its general housing stock, as follows:

"The Council has a policy of prioritising older person moves to sheltered schemes from its larger housing stock, both reducing under-occupation and releasing a family house that can then be re-let".

The current Allocations Policy allows for elderly persons to be prioritised for a move by the award of one additional point for each year the applicant or another qualifying member of the household, is over 60 years of age.

- 3.6 The Incentive to Move Scheme is intended to augment current policy and increase the amount of family accommodation available for re-let, and so, better utilise the remaining housing stock and alleviate the mismatch between supply and demand.
- 3.7 The Incentive to Move Scheme will give priority to elderly council tenants (aged over 60 years) who currently under-occupy two, three and four bedroom houses and who are prepared to transfer to smaller, more appropriate, sheltered accommodation. Those tenants in this category will be awarded an additional 25 points.
- 3.8 The Incentive to Move Scheme will involve the Council giving financial and organisational assistance to the qualifying applicants who are willing to move out of family accommodation, into sheltered accommodation.
- 3.9 Where the Council intends to allocate a property to an eligible applicant under the Incentive to Move Scheme, and where there is more than one eligible applicant under the scheme, the Council shall make the initial offer of accommodation to the applicant whose application attracts the most points under the Council's Points Scheme.
- 3.10 The Incentive to Move Scheme will provide financial assistance to the applicant. The applicant may choose any combination of the following services, up to a maximum of £400.00:
 - removal of furniture and effects
 - removal and relaying of carpet
 - disconnection and reconnection of gas and electric cookers
 - telephone disconnection and reconnection
 - disconnection and reconnection of plumbed in washing machines
 - adjusting of doors to fit newly laid carpets
 - re-direction of mail for up to 3 months
 - removal and re-fixing of curtain rails

The organisation of these services will be the responsibility of the Voids Team.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Members have approved the allocation of £2,000 for this pilot scheme.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The scheme aims to improve the rental income to the HRA as well as improving performance on voids

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The scheme will release family accommodation to help meet housing need and will offer practical help to older people, to encourage them to move to accommodation with support