
REPORT TO: Cabinet Member (Housing)

DATE: 16 June 2009

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

REPORTING OFFICER: Tenant Involvement Officer
(Mrs Amy Brown)

SUBJECT: **WELCOME PACK FOR NEW TENANTS**

WARDS AFFECTED: All

FORWARD PLAN REF: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider whether to introduce a Welcome Pack for new tenants of council homes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That a Welcome Pack is introduced for all new tenants of the Council, with a review of its effectiveness being undertaken in September 2010.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASONS FOR DECISION

3.1 Other housing authorities have found that the issuing of a Welcome Pack has proved to be useful for tenants moving into their new home.

3.2 The Pack offers an opportunity to convey essential information to new tenants and improve their knowledge about running their home.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

4.1 Not to introduce a Welcome Pack. The cost of providing the packs is relatively small. Consultation has been carried out with new tenants below 30 years old who are very supportive of its introduction. Feedback from this consultation, has shown that it would have been useful to have a few essential items to hand upon moving into your property (such as cleaning materials or a meter key) as well as useful information, such as contact numbers and details of where the meters are amongst other things.

5.0 THE WELCOME PACK FOR NEW TENANTS

5.1 A Welcome Pack would be made up of a few essential items and information that would be useful to have during the first couple of days in a new home, such as a radiator bleed key, dustpan and brush, information on where your meters are and heating instructions.

5.2 Based on consultation to date with tenants, the following items and information would be included in the Welcome Pack:

- Basic reminder of what is involved in having a council tenancy
- Heating instructions
- Information on meters
- Trouble shooter sheet on common house issues (such as turning off the stop tap if there is a large water leak)
- Household skills sheet
- Basic decorating sheet
- Window key
- Water
- Toilet roll
- Anti bacterial wipes
- Radiator bleed key
- Dustpan and brush
- Low energy light bulb
- Torch with batteries
- Bin bags
- Meter key
- Pen and notepad

5.3 The Welcome Pack would be stored in the offices of Harrogate Borough Council's repair and maintenance contractor, Connaught. Connaught would then put the Welcome Pack in a property when they sign it off ready for re-let.

5.4 The Welcome Pack would then be in the property when the new tenant arrives at their property, as consultation to date with tenants and research from other organisations has shown that this works better than giving it to the tenant when signing the tenancy agreement.

5.5 The continued development and implementation of the Welcome Pack could allow for further engagement with younger and other hard to reach tenants. It has also been suggested by younger tenants that a Welcome Pack in temporary accommodation would be useful.

6.0 LIKELY POSSIBLE COSTS OF THE WELCOME PACK

6.1 It is estimated that the box and the items to go in it could be put together for approximately £5 a box. Usually, there are around 300 new tenants each year. This would give a total estimated cost of £1,500.

6.2 Local businesses and contractors have been contacted to ask if they are able to help with the costs of the box in return for advertising space on the Welcome Pack. To date Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance, who provide contents insurance for Harrogate Borough Council tenants, has agreed to donate £350 for the cost of the Welcome Pack.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Welcome Pack has successfully been used by other local authorities and housing association as a means of improving information to new tenants and giving them useful items and advice required for running a home.

7.2 The effectiveness of the Welcome Pack should be evaluated after 12 months, during September 2010 and a further report will be submitted to the Cabinet Member (Housing) at this time.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT/CRIME AND DISORDER

		Implications are		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
A	Economy		✓	
B	Environment	✓		
C	Social Equity			
i)	General	✓		
ii)	Customer Care/People with Disabilities	✓		
iii)	Health Implications	✓		
D	Crime and Disorder	✓		

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable