
REPORT TO: Cabinet Member (Housing)

DATE: 29 September 2009

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

REPORTING OFFICER: Housing Policy & Strategy Officer
(Miss J Kilburn)

SUBJECT: **UNDER-OCCUPATION: AMENDMENT TO EXISTING SCHEME**

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

FORWARD PLAN REF: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to amend the existing Under-Occupation Scheme to allow payments to be made to Council tenants who downsize into accommodation that is not Council housing.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That approval be given to allow under-occupation payments to Council tenants who downsize to private sector accommodation or to social housing other than Council.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASONS FOR DECISION

3.1 The scheme currently helps existing Council tenants transfer to smaller Council properties. In line with the Council's drive to ensure tenants are given fair access to services, it is seen as important to allow all tenants wanting to downsize, regardless of the tenure they move into, to be able to access under-occupation payments.

3.2 There is not expected to be a significant financial implication to the Council by extending the scheme.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

4.1 Not to extend payments to Council tenants moving to smaller accommodation in the private sector or social housing providers. This is not in line with the Council's efforts to ensure fair access to services for all tenants.

5.0 BACKGROUND

5.1 The initial scheme was set up to help those tenants move from family sized accommodation into smaller accommodation, therefore freeing-up much needed general needs 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties.

5.2 Payments of £300 and £500 are paid to tenants who give up 1 bedroom and 2 bedrooms, respectively.

5.3 A full review of the current Under-Occupation Scheme is due to be completed in 2009/10.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 By amending the existing Under-Occupation scheme, the Council will be able to make better use of its housing stock and enable more homeless families to be housed.

Background Papers – None

OFFICER CONTACT: Please contact Jo Kilburn, Housing Policy & Strategy Officer, if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at the Department of Community Services, Springfield House, Kings Road, Harrogate, HG1 5NX, by telephone on 01423-556946 or by e-mail – jo.kilburn@harrogate.gov.uk

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