

EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET

Name of decision maker: Cllr Margaret Griffiths

Portfolio: Housing

Date of Portfolio Holder Decision: February 2015

Title of Decision: Housing Rents and Other Charges Policy (Policy document attached)

Decision made and reasons:

The Council has adopted a hybrid of the two latest pieces of Government Guidance on rent setting. The first was introduced in April 2002 and will be used to guide the rent setting policy for tenants who have not reached 'target rent' levels.

Government Guidance from May 2014 will be used as the guide for those tenants who have reached 'target rent'.

The revised Housing Rent Setting and Other Charges Policy will be effective from April 2015

Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)

The revised Housing Rent and Other Charges Policy (attached)

Background to the new policy is set out in the attached report

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/council-democracy/housing---10-09-14---item-12---appendix-1.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Has budget been approved? (provide budget codes):

Whilst there are no direct budget implications in terms of a required budget code or approval, the policy by which the Council charges and increases its rent to tenants in effect impacts every budget in the Housing Revenue Account.

The rental income from tenants contributes almost the total income for the HRA and therefore a policy which is both in line with Government Guidance but also affordable and collectable is essential.

Due to the potential for changes in government policy (welfare reform) and the economic climate as a whole it is essential that the policy is reviewed annually.

The proposed changes to the policy have been built into the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which was approved in September 2014

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

A staff working group has been working on the implications of the Government's rent setting guidance issued in May 2014. This included (Mark Gaynor - Director of Housing and Regeneration; James Deane - Director of Finance and Operations; Elliott Brooks - Assistant Director of Housing; Andy Vincent - Group Manager, Tenants and Leaseholders; Aaron Keyte - Aaron Keyte -Team Leader: Financial & Regulatory

Accounting). A number of other staff within the Housing Service have also been consulted on the policy – including Katie Kiely – Team Leader, Housing Income.

The implications of the changes proposed by the Government guidance issued in May 2014 was presented to the Council's Cabinet in September 2014 and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2014.

A discussion was held with members of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee on the impact of the Government guidance in August 2014.

Monitoring Officer comments: No comments to add to the report.

Section 151 Officer comments: This proposal is consistent with the budget for 2015/16, approved by Council in February 2015, and already forms the working assumption for the current HRA business plan.

The attached report outlines the risks, implications and value for money of adopting the new policy. <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/council-democracy/housing---10-09-14---item-12---appendix-1.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Options Considered and reasons for rejection:

The options considered prior to the establishment of the revised Housing Rents and Other Charges Policy are set out in the attached paper.

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/council-democracy/housing---10-09-14---item-12---appendix-1.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

The recommendation to the Portfolio Holder is to adopt a policy which is a hybrid of the two latest pieces of Government Guidance on rent setting. The first was introduced in April 2002 and will be used to guide the rent setting policy for tenants who have not reached 'target rent' levels.

Government Guidance from May 2014 will be used as the guide for those tenants who have reached 'target rent'.

The reason for this is to mitigate some of the financial implications of adopting the latest government guidance on the Housing Revenue Business Plan as set out in section 9 of the above report.

Portfolio Holders Signature:

Date: 12/3/15



Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

21/05/2014

Published 12/3/15.

PH-006-15.

Call in - 19/3/15.