

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 17 JANUARY 2005

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE CHARGE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO. 41-2005

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To review the apportionment of Housing Management and Support costs within the Sheltered Housing Service Charge and propose an alternative charging policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Sheltered Housing Service Charge is split between the Housing Management element and the Housing Support element. The Housing Management element being charged separately along with housing rent and the Housing Support element being charged to Supporting People services.
- 2.2. The combined Housing Management and Housing Support element is maintained at the current charge of £16.13 per week for the financial year 2005/2006.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Charging the Housing Management element of the Sheltered Housing Service Charge with housing rent will allow a redistribution of Supporting People Grant to fund existing and pipeline services.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. A number of key themes are affected including access to shelter and security.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Access to Council Services is available.

6. CONTEXT

- 6.1. A review of the Sheltered Housing Service Charge requires that the current charge is split to reflect the Housing Management and Housing Support elements of the service. This is in line with the Supporting People regulations which requires a review of services and identification of elements of the service. No service user will have to pay any more than they currently pay for the Sheltered Housing Service Charge.

7. **BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. Supporting People Grant was introduced in April 2003. The Grant is intended to fund Housing Support Services. Prior to the introduction of Supporting People housing support was charged as a housing service charge and collected with rent. It was eligible for Housing Benefit. For the start of Supporting People Councils were required to identify the various elements of services eligible for Housing Benefit and categorise these as management or support. The management element would continue to be funded through Housing Benefit but the support element would be funded from the new Supporting People Grant.
- 7.2. At the time of the assessment Supporting People guidance was in some areas ambiguous and contrived. The best assessment that could be made was that the Sheltered Housing Wardens service was predominantly support orientated and consequently 100% of the charge was applied to Supporting People Grant.
- 7.3. In line with the Supporting People regulations it is now time to review that service and the related charges. The review now has the benefits of final, less ambiguous, guidance on eligible services and a better understanding of how the existing Sheltered Housing Warden service fits with the intention of the Supporting People policy.
- 7.4. Housing and Social Work staff have now completed the review and have concluded that the elements of the service should be split 40% Housing Management and 60% Housing Support. The consequence of this is that 40% of the current charge should be charged as an accommodation related service charge, eligible for Housing Benefit and the remaining 60% being charged as a Supporting People charge.
- 7.5. It is therefore proposed to amend the charging system for the Sheltered Housing Wardens Service to reflect the split between management and support services.
- 7.6. As of 4th April 2005 service users will pay a Housing Management service charge of £6.45 and a Supporting People service charge of £9.68. The combined charge will be the same £16.13 Supporting People charge as currently levied. The relevant charges will be eligible for Housing Benefit or Supporting People Grant.
- 7.7. In essence, no service user should be worse off as a consequence of this change. However, due to the complexity and vagaries of the Supporting People charging system a few clients (maximum 161) may be adversely affected. A protection scheme will be introduced to ensure that no users are charged more than they are currently. The exact details of this are yet to be calculated but the system will be in place for the introduction of the alternative charges.

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1. Reviewing the current Sheltered Housing Service Charge and rearranging the element charges allows Supporting People Grant to be focused on providing support services thereby better meeting the support need of Dundee citizens.
- 8.2. No service users will be adversely affected by the changes.

9. **CONSULTATION**

9.1. All Chief Officers have been consulted on the content of this report.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1. None.

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31st December 2004