

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2002

REPORT ON: TENANTS' ALLOWANCES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 116-2002

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The Housing Committee of 19 February 2001 agreed a report by the Director of Housing to upgrade tenants' allowances in line with inflation. These allowances are now due to be updated in line with inflation for financial year 2002/2003.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Housing Committee:

- 2.1. agree that the Tenants' Allowances Scheme should be increased in line with inflation as detailed in paragraph 7 and the Appendix of this report from 1 April 2002.
- 2.2. note that Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations wish further discussion on the issue of laminate flooring.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. These allowances are increased in line with inflation and apply to both revenue and capital programmes. The allowances detailed can be met from within these budgets.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. The purpose of the tenants allowances scheme is to ensure that tenants are not significantly 'out of pocket' as a direct result of works taking place in their home. Payments do not fully cover all costs incurred, as in normal circumstances, tenants are responsible for decoration and an assessment for wear and tear is taken into account. The intention is, therefore, to approach tenants requirements with flexibility, so that individual needs can be catered for, as well as achieving across the board consistency and fairness in the levels of payment made.

7. TYPES OF ALLOWANCE PROVIDED

7.1. Decoration Allowance

This is payable to assist with redecoration following remedial or improvement work where the tenant's decoration has been affected.

The same allowances are also made to new tenants where the conditions of the relet house merits an allowance. The appendix details the rooms which qualify for decoration allowance and the maximum allowance for different sizes of property.

7.2. **Window Blinds**

Where replacement windows have been installed which alter the dimensions so that the existing blinds do not fit, a voucher is issued to compensate for alterations or contribute to new blinds, as the tenant desires. It is proposed that the value per blind is increased from £18.50 to £19.

7.3. **Floorcovering Allowance**

7.3.1. Where floorcoverings need to be uplifted to carry out remedial or improvement work, the tenant is given a choice of

- a. a voucher as a contribution to lifting and relaying the floorcovering.
- b. a specialist carpet fitter, employed by the main contractor, to lift and relay carpets etc which can reasonably be lifted without damage. If this is not possible the matter is referred back to the Housing Officer who will issue a voucher.

It is proposed that the value per house of the floorcovering voucher is increased from £84 to £87.

7.3.2. It is also recommended that, where damage to floorcovering is anticipated as part of the work, e.g. where new kitchen units are a different size from existing units or a fire place has to be removed leaving a gap in the carpet, then an additional floorcovering voucher up to the value of £87 can be issued.

7.3.3. Where tenants have fitted wooden or laminate flooring and this is unavoidably damaged as part of a Capital Contract, an additional floorcovering voucher can be issued up to the value of £87.

7.3.4. For clarification, a tenant can receive a maximum of £261 for floorcovering allowances, where all the criteria above are met.

7.4. **Non-slip Flooring/Floor Tiles**

Where tiles can be removed and refitted the appointed contractor will carry out this work. Where they cannot be lifted, they will, as at present, be replaced under the contract.

7.5. **Urgent Additional Allowance**

This permits an additional payment up to £228 to be made if urgent rehousing is required and where genuine need exists. This is limited to tenants who are either in receipt of housing benefit or have particular medical requirements. Each application will, however, be considered on its own merit. It is proposed to increase this allowance from £228 to £234.

7.6. Removal and Storage of Furniture

Housing Officers will, where required, arrange removal and storage of tenants' furniture directly with a removal contractor on the tenant's behalf.

8. DECANT ALLOWANCE – TENANTS MAKING THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

This is a payment made to tenants who make their own arrangements for alternative accommodation when they require to be decanted from their home. This allowance in 2001/2002 was £54 per week or part of week plus a rent abatement for the period that the tenant cannot live in their house. It is proposed to raise the allowance to £56 a week for financial year 2002/2003.

9. REVIEW OF ALLOWANCE LEVELS

The appendix illustrates the new allowances increased in line with inflation, which have been quoted throughout the report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Director of Support Services, Chief Corporate Planning Officer, Director of Finance and Chief Executive have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations has also been consulted regarding this report.

**ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX**TENANTS' ALLOWANCES FROM 1ST APRIL 2002****DECORATION ALLOWANCE**

The following rooms can qualify for a decoration allowance, subject to the house size, a **maximum** allowance being applied to the final decoration allowance awarded:

Kitchen / Hall & Stairs / Bedrooms / Lounge / Bathroom

<u>Maximum Allowance per Dwelling</u>	<u>From 1st April 2002</u>
1-apartment.....	£304
2-apartment.....	£380
3-apartment.....	£456
4-apartment.....	£532
5-apartment.....	£608
6-apartment.....	£684
 <u>Maximum Allowance per Room</u>	 £ 76
 <u>URGENT ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCE</u>	 £234
 <u>FLOOR COVERING ALLOWANCE</u>	 £ 87
 <u>MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE FLOOR COVERING</u> ...	 £261
 <u>BLINDS</u>	 £ 19
 <u>DECANT ALLOWANCE</u> Tenants making their own arrangements for alternative accommodation.....	 £ 56