

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2012

REPORT ON: INTRODUCTION OF AMENITY HOUSING

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 116-2012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report describes the policy for the introduction of Amenity Housing.
- 1.2. This report follows an agreement by Committee of a report in October 2011 which evaluated a Local Letting Initiative for Housing people aged over 45 and recommended the introduction of Amenity Housing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is recommended to:
- 2.2. Agree the policy for identifying and letting Amenity Housing as described in paragraphs 4.3 - 4.13 of this report.
- 2.3. Agree the implementation plan and timescales described at paragraph 4.14 of this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. All actions are within the Department's approved budget.

4. MAIN TEXT

- 4.1. Report No 475-2011 "Evaluation of Local Letting Initiative and introduction of Amenity Housing" described the difficulty in letting some sheltered properties in certain letting areas within the City. These concerns led to implementation of a Local Letting Initiative where first floor sheltered flats that could not attract sufficient applicants who desired or qualified for sheltered housing be advertised to applicants aged 45 or over.
- 4.2. On 31 October 2011 the Housing Committee agreed to formalise the positive impacts of the Local Letting Initiative by creating the option for "Amenity Housing". Amenity Housing is provided by a number of registered social landlords in Dundee. The provision of Amenity Housing will also contribute in providing additional options for maintaining older people within their communities. The Director of Housing was remitted to bring forth the detail of an amendment to the letting policy together with arrangements for informing applicants of the new category.

4.3. **What is Amenity Housing**

Amenity Housing provides independent accommodation for people aged 50 years or over in a warm, comfortable and secure environment. However it may also be suitable for a person who has a medical condition or special need, where it has been assessed that amenity housing would be suitable for them.

4.4. The accommodation is designed for older people who do not want or need a full sheltered warden service and who do not have significant physical impairment. Each property will normally comprise of a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom or shower-room with heating throughout with one or more of the following features:

- Raised sockets and switches
- Bathroom handrails
- Non slip flooring
- Will be no higher than ground or 1st floor.

4.5. The accommodation does not provide a sheltered warden service but the following can be provided if required:

- Community Alarm
- Support Services

4.6. Note that depending upon income a charge may be made for these services.

4.7. **Identifying Amenity Housing**

The Council will categorise the following properties as Amenity Housing: sheltered houses where there is no significant demand and houses which have previously been de-commissioned as sheltered housing. When a house which is suitable to be let as Amenity becomes available, the Council will contact applicants on the Amenity Waiting List who may be suitable.

4.8. Because the identification of Amenity Housing is responsive it will not be possible in most cases to give applicants information on the prospects of them being re-housed.

4.9. **Applying for Amenity Housing**

Individuals or couples meeting the criteria for application may apply via an application form or an amendment to an existing application. Applicants who are under 50 years of age will also need to complete a medical self assessment form (TMAS 3). Where applicants under 50 apply on social need evidence will be required to be submitted from a relevant professional.

4.10. When the application has been assessed (including any assessments for care, physical aids and adaptations, support or Community Alarm) the application will be added to the housing Waiting List.

4.11. **Priority of Applicants**

Applicants will be awarded priority points according to assessed needs as defined by the letting policy (i.e. points for medical conditions, homelessness, overcrowding, under-occupancy, social needs and redevelopment will be taken into consideration).

4.12. Applicants who meet the application criteria who have asked for a house of the size and type on offer will be eligible to be offered an amenity house. Offers will be made to applicants with the highest points. Where two or more applicants have the same points, then the applicant who has waited longest will take priority.

4.13. **Implementation**

Implementation of Amenity housing will require several tasks to be completed. Consultation will require to be undertaken on these changes to the Letting Policy. Changes will have to be specified to the Council's I.T. systems, primarily the Letting system. The Amenity Housing will have to be adequately publicised (printing and amending leaflets and the published Lettings policy), we will have to inform all prospective tenants of Amenity housing. A proposed timetable for this is outlined below:

- Agreement of policy by Housing Committee - March 2012
- Development of I.T. Brief - April 2012.
- I.T. Development and Testing - May-June 2012.
- Staff Training - 31 May 2012 - June 2012.
- Introduction of Amenity Housing operational August 2012.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability.

5.2. Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Risk Management. There are no issues to report.

5.3. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council Website <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equipact>.

6. **CONSULTATIONS**

6.1. The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance, all other Chief Officers, the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations and Registered Tenants Organisations have been consulted. No concerns were expressed.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Equality Impact Assessment.

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