

5th March 2019

Community, Health & Housing Committee

Decant Policy 2019

Report of: *Angela Abbott, Housing Services Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background and recommendation to adopt a formal written *Decant Policy* ('the Policy'). The Policy will allow for a more focussed and transparent approach to service provision as a social landlord and to private sector home owners.
- 1.2 The Council does not currently have a written and published Policy and given current building projects, and future housing strategy it is as an area for improvement to move towards substantial assurance.
- 1.3 The introduction and implementation of the Policy will ensure efficiency, economy and excellence of service provision as a social landlord.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Committee formally approve Option 1 the adoption of the '*Decant Policy 2019*' at set out at Appendix A.

3. Introduction and Background

There is no statutory requirement for a stock-holding Local Authority to produce an Decant Policy. A 'decant' is where a household is required to move from their existing home to an alternate accommodation, either temporarily or permanently.

The introduction of a written published Decant Policy will allow for a greater customer focus and will provide an over-arching mechanism through which to ensure that any future decants are undertaken in a transparent and consistent manner with the focus being on service provision for the tenant.

The Policy provides a framework for understanding both the statutory duties the Council as landlord has and the approach Officers will take regarding individual decants.

Issues, Options and Analysis of Options:

The Policy has been deliberately drafted to work in synthesis with Housing Services' core Strategies and Policies, and recognises the need for creating a stable, efficient and tenant-focussed service.

Option 1: Implementation of the Policy:

Implementing the policy will allow for:

- Transparency, particularly for tenants
- Tailored-service provision
- Economic focus
- Future audit compliancy
- Creation of written procedures to underpin the Policy

Option 2: Non-implementation of the Policy:

Non-implementation will potentially:

- Fail to advance Corporate priorities
- Cause confusion for tenants
- Create lack of focus on service provision

Reasons for Recommendation:

Option 1 is recommended as the most transparent option for the Council and supports the '*Getting our House in Order*' transformation programme for Housing Services. It will provide a clear document for tenants to hold the Council to account.

Taking no further action will fail to advance corporate priorities and would be counter to our modernisation approach.

Consultation

Consultation with 'Tenant Talkback' was conducted on the 22nd January 2019. 'Tenant Talkback' welcomed the introduction of the Policy to clarify policy direction and provide clear guidance on the process.

References to Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan aims to:

- To deliver safe and comfortable homes which are efficient and sustainable.

- Manage our stock to recognise the limited resources available and supporting those in greatest need.
- Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.

Implications

Financial Implications

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There is a budget of £10k per annum to fund any under occupation allowance payments to tenants.

For other costs associated with the Decant Policy, it is envisaged these will be one off costs as and when they arise, therefore they will be captured through the Council's budget monitoring processes and reported accordingly, as part of Budget updates. If these costs cannot be met from existing budgets, they will be funded from the HRA working balance.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Gina Clarke, Corporate Governance Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer

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The Decant Policy provides clarity as to the circumstances as to when households are required to be either temporarily or permanently displaced from their homes

Section 29 Land Compensation Act 1973, as amended states that a person is entitled to home loss payment (subject to certain limitations) where s/he is displaced from a dwelling. The Decant Policy is in line with this requirement..

The Council is required to ensure that the policy comply with the 2011 public sector equality duty under s 149 of Equality Act 2010.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.

Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None.

Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Draft ‘Decant Policy 2019’

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