
Meeting of the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel

30th October 2006

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Services

Revision To The Homeless Persons Incentive Scheme For Repayment Of Former Tenant Arrears

Summary

1. The Executive Member is asked to approve a revision to the existing scheme that encourages homeless persons to reduce their former tenancy arrears and speed up their eligibility for permanent accommodation.

Background

2. On 6th March 2006 members approved a scheme whereby a pilot incentive scheme on the repayment of former tenant arrears in the case of current homeless applicants.
3. Under the scheme that was approved if a customer makes regular payments as agreed in a payment plan over a continuous 6 month period the council will reduce the customers debt by the equivalent of 50% of what they have paid. For example, a customer makes a weekly payment of £5 for a 6 month period amounting to £130 CYC will further reduce their arrears by a further £65.
4. At EMAP on 11th September 2006 members were asked to amend the scheme to make it more attractive to customers and encourage more of them to take up the scheme. It was included in the 'Customer rewards' report, members will recall that there was significant debate about other elements of this report and the original proposals were amended. Unfortunately this part of the report was overlooked.

Consultation

5. The Federation of tenant and residents association were consulted on the 'Customer Reward' report in August 2006 and fully endorsed it.

Options

6. Option 1 - At present the scheme to encourage the homeless to repay their former tenant arrears is based on them maintaining repayments over a 26

week period. It is proposed to make an interim payment at 13 weeks to encourage them to maintain the momentum.

7. Option 2 – Maintain the existing arrangement

Analysis

8. Option 1 – This will encourage greater participation in the scheme. So far 17 customers have started to repay their former tenant arrears on a regular basis this has resulted in £2,500 being recovered. An interim payment at 13 weeks will encourage these customers to continue to reduce their debt and persuade others to join the scheme.
9. Option 2 – Less customers will take advantage of the scheme.

Corporate Priorities

10. Specific links can be made to the following:

“Outward facing”

- Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest
- Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city
- Improve the quality and availability of decent affordable homes in the city

“Improving our organisational effectiveness”

- Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services

Implications

11. Financial implications - There are no further financial implications in making an interim payment at 13 weeks.
12. There are no Human Resources (HR), Equalities, Legal, Information Technology, Crime and Disorder, Property or Other implications.

Risk Management

13. The main risk associated with this proposal is that the initiative will not result in customers taking up the initiative and they will end up in temporary accommodation for a longer period

Recommendations

14. The Executive member for Housing approves option 1 to amend the existing pilot.

Reason: to encourage greater participation in the scheme.

Contact Details

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Bill Hodson
Director of Housing and Adult Services

Report Approved

Date 4/10/2006

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Emap report 11/9/2006 Customer Reward Scheme for Council Tenants
Emap report 6/3/2006 Review of the way Former tenant arrears are dealt with for homeless applicants

Annexes

None