

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

21 May 2024

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision

1 TRANSFER INCENTIVE SCHEME

Summary

This report recommends the approval of a new transfer incentive scheme policy to help Tonbridge & Malling B.C. make the best use of existing housing stock.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Tonbridge & Malling B.C. (TMBC) needs to ensure that the most effective use of the housing stock in its borough is being made. Where properties are under-occupied or where adapted properties are occupied by those who do not require adaptations, those in need of larger properties or those with disabilities are less likely to be rehoused. A transfer incentive scheme policy is intended to help ensure that properties are being matched to housing need and contributes to other approaches to manage under occupancy taken by both TMBC and housing providers.

1.1.2 An action to investigate a pilot project to address under occupation formed part of the Housing Strategy Action plan for year 2 2023-24.

1.1.3 A Transfer Incentive Scheme is attached at **Annex 1**. This provides incentive payments ranging from £1,500 to £3,500 depending on the size of the property freed up with an additional £2,000 for the freeing up of an adapted property.

1.1.4 It is recognised that a financial incentive may not be the only factor or indeed the most important factor in encouraging a tenant to downsize. We will work with the relevant housing provider to provide support where required in terms of easing any move and we will link in where appropriate with other agencies who could offer practical help e.g. support with new fixtures and fittings etc.

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 Ensuring the best use of the housing stock contributes towards the legal housing duties we have under Part 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 The funding for this scheme will come from existing budgets. For applicants in receipt of a relevant means tested benefit this will be from the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) budget and for others it will be from the Housing Assistance reserve.
- 1.3.2 The scheme will be closely monitored for take up and applications managed with the existing budget available. Where it is determined there is no available funding in year, applications may be deferred to the following year.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 There are no perceived risks with the adoption of this policy.

1.5 Recommendations

- 1.5.1 That Members **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet the approval of the transfer incentive scheme as detailed at Annex 1.

Background papers:

Nil

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