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The Chair and Members of Cabinet

27 January 2020

Dear Councillor,

Please attend a meeting of the CABINET to be held on TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2020 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield, the agenda for which is set out below.

AGENDA

Part 1(Public Information)

1. Declarations of Members' and Officers' Interests relating to items on the Agenda
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 January, 2020.

4. Forward Plan

Please follow the link below to view the latest Forward Plan.

[Forward Plan](#)

Items Recommended to Cabinet via Cabinet Members

Chesterfield Borough Council, Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield S40 1LP

Telephone: 01246 345 345, Text: 07960 910 264, Email: [info@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:info@chesterfield.gov.uk)

[www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk)

## Cabinet Member for Housing

5. Amended Tenants Incentive Scheme Policy (Pages 7 - 32)
6. Exclusion of the Public

To move “That under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.”

## **Part 2 (Non Public Information)**

## Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

7. Acquisition of commercial office at Chesterfield Waterside (Pages 33 - 98)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Local Government and Regulatory Law Manager and Monitoring Officer

## CABINET

Tuesday, 14th January, 2020

Present:-

Councillor Serjeant (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Blank  
T Gilby  
Ludlow  
Holmes

Councillors J Innes  
Mannion-Brunt  
Sarvent

\*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

86 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS  
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

87 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Gilby.

88 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 December, 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

89 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the four month period 1 January, 2020 to 30 April, 2020 was reported for information.

**\*RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

90 **DELEGATION REPORT**

Decisions taken by Cabinet Members during November, 2019 were reported.

**\*RESOLVED –**

That the Delegation Report be noted.

**91 COLLECTION FUND REVISED ESTIMATES 2019/20**

The Acting Chief Finance Officer presented the Collection Fund revised estimates for 2019/20 which predicted an estimated surplus of £940,939 on the Council Tax elements of the Collection Fund.

The report noted that the major precepting authorities would be able to take this surplus into account when setting their Council Tax precepts for the 2020/21 financial year.

**\*RESOLVED –**

That the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund of £940,939 be agreed and allocated to the major precepting authorities as outlined in Appendix A of the officer's report.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

To fulfil a statutory requirement and to feed into the budget setting process for 2020/21.

**92 ANNUAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE SETTING REVIEW**

The Assistant Director – Housing submitted a report recommending for approval Council house rent and service charge levels for 2019/20.

The period of rent reductions introduced by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 would elapse on 31 March, 2020 and the Government would revert back to the previous formula which will allow rent increases to be set at up to the consumer price index (CPI) + 1% for the period 2020 to 2025. In addition, from 1 April, 2020, the Government had directed all local authorities to apply its Rent Standard to housing rents (social and affordable). The average social formula rent for 2020/21 would be £80.92

per week, an increase of £2.13 per week based on current social rented stock.

A detailed summary of the proposed service charge levels for 2020/21 was attached at Appendix A of the officer's report. It was noted that the proposed charges had been devised to ensure that all services break even on costs.

**\*RESOLVED –**

1. That, for 2020/21, individual social rents be set based on the current National Social Rent Policy, giving a rent increase of 2.7% with effect from 6 April, 2020.
2. That, for 2020/21 and onwards, where a social rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level be increased to the target rent for that property.
3. That, for 2020/21, individual affordable rents be set based on the current National Social Rent Policy giving a cash rent increase of 2.7% with effect from 6 April, 2020.
4. That, for 2020/21 and onwards, where an affordable rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level be set by reference to 80% of the market rent (including service charges where applicable) for a similar property at the time of re-letting or the formula rent for the property, whichever is the greater.
5. That the service charges be increased as set out in Appendix A of the officer's report.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS**

1. To enable the council to set the level of council house rents in accordance with Government guidelines and the Rent Standard.
2. To enable the council to set service charges for 2020/21 and ensure that the cost of delivering services continues to break even.
3. To contribute to the council's corporate priority 'to improve the quality of life for local people'.

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## For publication

### Review of the Tenants Incentive Scheme

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Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report by:	Liz Cook, Assistant Director, Housing.

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## **For publication**

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### **1.0 Purpose of report**

1.1 To seek approval of the revised Tenants Incentive Scheme.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 That Cabinet approve the implementation of the revised Tenants Incentive Scheme from the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

2.2 That Cabinet approves the policy documentation shown at Appendix A. The new scheme will supersede all previous arrangements.

**2.3 That Cabinet approves the Communications and Marketing Plan shown at Appendix B.**

2.4 **That Cabinet agree that the scheme is reviewed as required subject to significant legislative change or every 2 years.**

### 3.0 **Report details**

- 3.1 Chesterfield Borough Council has had a Tenants Incentive Scheme in place since 2006; that scheme offered payment packages depending upon the number of bedrooms that were released.
- 3.2 The scheme was reviewed in 2010 where additional support packages were introduced in response to emerging issues; this included where tenants were required to meet their health and well-being needs to prevent the requirement for adaptations or where the adaptation was not possible, and where a tenant has succeeded to a tenancy of a property which was inappropriate in type or size.
- 3.3 A further review was considered by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012. This made further amendments to the aims of the scheme and the payment packages.
- 3.4 Since the review in 2012 there have been significant legislative and social policy changes that have affected our tenants and applicants; these include the introduction and roll out of Universal Credit and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These changes have had an impact on considerations we need to take to support applicants when they are being housed to ensure affordability and suitability of the homes offered.
- 3.5 The overall objective of the Tenant Incentive Scheme is to support tenants to move to a home that better meets their needs, ensure we make the best use of our housing stock. By ensuring tenants access homes that meet their needs we aim to maximise the length of tenancies creating stability for families and communities. The scheme will support tenants to move into the right size homes, so their welfare benefits

match their rent liability. Changes to the welfare benefit system have meant that tenants who significantly under-occupy are at greater risk of rent arrears.

3.6 In investing in a Tenants Incentive Scheme there are additional benefits and savings to the Council and overall public purse. The scheme will support delivery of other Council priorities including positive health and well-being impacts, stability in communities and reductions in inequality by providing support to vulnerable people.

3.7 In designing the scheme and undertaking the review benchmarking has been done with similar Local Authority Schemes.

3.8 Following the review, a Tenants Incentive Scheme Policy Document has been produced and is attached at **Appendix A**.

3.9 Overview – Tenants Incentive Scheme

3.10 Proposed payment packages:

- A - £2,500 where a tenant moves from a family home into smaller accommodation.
- B - £1,250 where we are unable to adapt a tenant's property and the tenant moves into more suitable accommodation.
- C - £1,250 in succession cases payment of £1,250 will assist a move to alternate suitable accommodation.
- D - £500 in mutual exchange cases, for tenants who are downsizing.

3.11 The proposed payments amounts are fit for purpose to enable the scheme to operate effectively and favorably benchmark with similar Local Authority Schemes.

3.12 Proposed support packages

The support to be offered includes:

- Direct matching to alternative accommodation

- Help to arrange removals
- Arranging disconnection and reconnection of services
- Arranging re-fitting carpets
- Paying off rent arrears

3.13 Costs associated with this support will be deducted from the payment package allocated.

3.14 To ensure effective take up and use of the scheme a communications and marketing plan to actively promote the scheme and maximise its use has been developed and is attached at **Appendix B**.

3.15 This targeted approach will include:

- Development of a clear and transparent leaflet
- Detailed page on the council website explaining the scheme and how to apply
- Targeted mailshot to tenants currently under occupying who might benefit from the scheme
- Briefing for staff and members to enable referrals to the scheme to be made at the appropriate time
- Production of case studies and a video of a completed case posted on the council's social media and web pages.

#### 4.0 **Financial Considerations**

4.1 The allocated budget for the scheme each year is £101,000. Current demand for the scheme has resulted in uptake and expenditure against the budgeted amount. In the previous two financial years the scheme has assisted 45 households. The active Communications & Marketing Plan will support take up and will deliver tangible savings across a range of Council expenditure.

4.2 Indicative costs include the average cost void property in 2019/20 was £2,276 and the average cost of a homeless application is between £5,000 and £6,000.

4.3 Chesterfield Borough Council currently has 532 tenants that continue to be affected by the under-occupancy charge which pose a considerable risk to the sustainability of those tenancies and targeted support will be offered through this Scheme.

4.4 Demand for the scheme will be managed within the budget.

## 5.0 Risk management

5.1 The main risks associated with the proposals are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Households occupying properties that are too large and do not meet their housing need.	High	Medium	The scheme enables mobility within housing stock to ensure people accommodated according to need.	Medium	Low
Increase in rent arrears/rent loss	High	High	By accommodating households according to need and affordability the risk of rent arrears accruing is reduced resulting in fewer evictions and a maximisation of rental income for the council	Low	Medium
Increase in families becoming homeless.	High	Medium	By ensuring mobility within the council's stock it will make family homes more available and reduce the	Medium	Low

			possibility of families becoming homeless.		
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## 6.0 **Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced and is attached at **Appendix C**.

## 7.0 **Recommendations**

7.1 That Cabinet approve the implementation of the revised Tenants Incentive Scheme from the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

7.2 That Cabinet approves the policy documentation shown at Appendix A. The new scheme will supersede all previous arrangements.

7.3 **That Cabinet approves the Communications and Marketing Plan shown at Appendix B.**

7.4 **That Cabinet agree that the scheme is reviewed as required subject to significant legislative change or every 2 years.**

## 8.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

8.1 To encourage mobility within our housing stock and ensuring tenants occupy properties that meet their housing need and are affordable to them.

8.2 Reduce rent arrears and maximise rental income.

8.3 Prevent homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment.

## Decision information

<b>Key decision number</b>	<b>899</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## Document information

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact number/email</b>
<b>Carl Griffiths - Housing Options Manager</b>	<b>01246 345117 Carl.griffiths@chesterfield.gov.uk</b>
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	Tenants Incentive Scheme Policy
Appendix B	Communications and Marketing Plan
Appendix C	Equality impact assessment

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**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Tenants Incentive Scheme Policy

December 2019

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to assist tenants who have a right to remain in their own home but live in a property that is too big for their housing need to move into a smaller home.
- 1.2 The policy will also contribute towards the Council making best use of housing stock by encouraging:
  - The release of high demand family size accommodation,
  - Tenants to move to smaller homes,
  - Tenants to live in homes that are affordable.
- 1.3 The scheme provides a framework of payments offered to tenants to incentivise and encourage them to downsize or move to more suitable accommodation according to their needs. The scheme promotes increased mobility amongst tenants and best use of housing stock.

## 2. Aims

- 2.1 Chesterfield Borough Council (“CBC”) seeks to promote greater mobility within our housing stock, specifically in relation to the appropriate allocation of larger family homes or other accommodation that is in high demand but that we have low supply within our stock profile.
- 2.2 The scheme assists households in finding suitable accommodation that meets their housing need on a long-term basis but is also affordable to them.
- 2.3 This 2019 policy seeks to increase the use of the scheme by targeting tenants most in need that could benefit from the scheme.

## 3. Definition

- 3.1 “Family type accommodation” for the purposes of this document is accommodation that is a house having 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms.

## 4. Eligibility

- 4.1 The scheme is available to all households that are secure tenants of Chesterfield Borough Council.
- 4.2 Generally, applicants will not be considered where possession action is ongoing. However, each case will be considered on a discretionary basis by the Housing Options Manager.

## 5. Criteria Framework and payments Amounts

5.1 The following criteria determine the circumstances where payments will be made and the payment amounts:

### Option A

Downsizing

Payment - £2,500

A Tenants Incentive Scheme payment can be made to tenants moving from family type accommodation to smaller accommodation as a result of general downsizing.

Whilst CBC lets "parlour type" properties (properties with a dining room) on the basis that this room can be used as a bedroom, for the purposes of the tenant's incentive scheme a parlour will not be considered to be a bedroom.

In respect of mutual exchange cases the payment will be issued to the tenant downsizing.

### Option B

Unable to adapt/Alternative to adaptations

Payment - £1,250

A payment can be made to tenants that require adaptations to meet their specific needs where they agree to move to a property that has previously been adapted and will meet their requirements.

It should be noted that the need for an adaptation will be considered under the Council's Adaptation Policy by the Derbyshire Adaptations Partnership (DAP).

### Option C

Tenants with no right to succeed to a tenancy.

Payment – up to £1,250

Where a tenant occupies a property but is not a named tenant and has not right to succeed to the tenancy under the current laws of succession.

### Option D

Mutual Exchange

Payment - £500

Where tenants have agreed a mutual exchange which includes downsizing in accommodation.

6. Additional assistance

6.1 Should tenants require; CBC will assist in:

- Direct matching to alternative accommodation
- Helping to arrange removals
- Arranging disconnection and reconnection of services
- Arranging re-fitting of carpets and/or laying of new floor coverings

6.2 Deductions in respect of the additional assistance may be made from the final payment made to the tenant/s.

7. Promotion

7.1 The Council will:

- Target the scheme at tenants that are under-occupying family homes
- Produce leaflets and other promotional documentation for distribution
- Publish the scheme via the Council's website.

8. Review

8.1 The scheme will be reviewed in 2 years or sooner should there be an appropriate legislative or social policy change.

## Chesterfield Borough Council Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form

<i>Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy:</i>	Review of Tenant's Incentive Scheme Policy	
<i>Service Area:</i>	Housing	
<i>Section:</i>	Housing Options	
<i>Lead Officer:</i>	Carl Griffiths	
<i>Date of assessment:</i>	10/19	
<i>Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:</i>		
<i>Existing</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Changed</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>New / Proposed</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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### Section 1 – Clear aims and objectives

#### 1. What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The TIS scheme is designed to encourage households living in council properties that would be classed as too large for their housing need. When households apply to the housing register their housing need, specifically the numbers of bedrooms they require, are assessed.

As a council we offer secure tenancies which often mean that households live in the same property for a considerable length of time. Often within that time the make-up of their household changes. This can include an increase in the number of applicants but also a decrease where people have left the property. Where people have left the property this often leaves the remaining occupant in a position called “under-occupation” when compared to their housing need. In practical terms it means that we sometimes have single tenants living in larger family homes. It is common in this situation that tenants, if in receipt of state benefits, are unable to afford the rent on the larger properties.

Within our stock profile we have the largest demand for family homes of 2 bedrooms and above.

This scheme enables the council to offer a financial incentive to tenants in this situation to assist and encourage them to move into smaller accommodation that meets their housing need. This in turn enables us to use the family accommodation for those applicants who need it.

The scheme creates increased mobility amongst our tenants and enables us to better meet the housing needs of our applicants. It also supports the delivery of the council's homelessness prevention duties and tenancy sustainment activity.

## 2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and how?

As above the intended beneficiaries of this scheme are tenants who are under-occupying family accommodation by moving them in to more suitable and affordable accommodation.

Additional beneficiaries are the applicants on the Council's housing register who will have increased access to larger family accommodation they require.

In order to encourage greater mobility within housing stock and increasing availability of family accommodation for which there is the highest level of demand, the policy, level of payments and associated support have been reviewed.

## 3. What outcomes do you want to achieve?

- Improved allocation of housing stock
- Increased mobility of tenants within our own stock
- Better tenancy sustainment outcomes.
- Delivery of homeless duties
- Reduction in expenditure on bed and breakfast
- Support to tenants to move

**4. What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved?**

This is a voluntary incentivised scheme requiring tenants to agree to moving from one property to another. This can therefore cause issues for the Council where tenants are settled in properties that are no longer best suited to them and other tenants are waiting for similar properties.

Some tenants that are significantly under occupying family accommodation are at greater risk of rent arrears and potential eviction due to the higher rent levels compared to their entitlement to Housing Benefit. In this situation the likelihood of there being an unaffordable shortfall is increased.

**5. Any other relevant background information**

In previous two financial years the scheme has assisted the following number of households:

Financial year 2017 – 2018 – 21 Households. £21,934.10 Expenditure.

Financial year 2018 – 2019 – 24 Households. £28,029.81 Expenditure.

## **Section 2 – Collecting your information**

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**6. What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?**

Historically the scheme has been under utilised and expenditure of the budget has been low. Monitoring of the scheme has not been undertaken but under the new proposed policy regular monitoring of both expenditure and outcomes will be conducted.

The information gathered will include:

- Number of tenants accessing the scheme.
- Numbers of bedrooms released by downsizing.
- Numbers of tenancies sustained.
- Numbers of cases of homelessness prevention.
- Decrease in B&B expenditure.

### Section 3 – Additional engagement activities

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7. Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken when developing the proposal and completing this EIA. Have those who are anticipated to be affected by the policy been consulted with?

Date	Activity	Main findings
		<i>Brief description of key themes and outcomes of related engagement activity eg. concerns raised and/or how the activity helped to develop the proposal.</i>

## Section 4 – What is the impact?

**8. Summary of anticipated impacts.** *Please tick at least one option per protected characteristic. Think about barriers people may experience in accessing services, how the policy is likely to affect the promotion of equality, knowledge of customer experiences to date. You may need to think about sub-groups within categories eg. older people, younger people, people with hearing impairment etc.*

	Positive impact	Negative impact	No disproportionate impact
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability and long term conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnant women and people on parental leave	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion and belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 9. Details of anticipated positive impacts.

a)	The service will enable households to move into sheltered or smaller accommodation that is designed for applicants of particular ages and/or with disabilities.							
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
b)	The service will increase the availability of family homes for those households that increase in number due to marriage, pregnancy or any other reason.							
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
c)								

<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
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**10. Details of anticipated negative impacts.**

a)	<b>Negative impact:</b>	<i>Please provide details of any negative impacts identified in the summary table above and tick the group/s the impact applies to below. Delete or add rows below as required.</i>						
	<b>Mitigating action:</b>	<i>If action has been identified to mitigate against the negative impact, please provide details</i>						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Religion							
b)	<b>Negative impact:</b>							
	<b>Mitigating action:</b>							
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Religion							
c)	<b>Negative impact:</b>							
	<b>Mitigating action:</b>							
	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Religion							

**11. Have all negative impacts identified in the table above been mitigated against with appropriate action?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<i>If no, please explain why:</i>
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## Section 5 – Recommendations and monitoring

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**12.** How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

The scheme and policy are available to ALL tenants and was not designed to specifically meet the requirements of any particular group.

**13.** How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

Ongoing monthly monitoring of the service  
Policy will be reviewed in 2 years

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## Section 6 – Knowledge management and publication

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Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Service Manager and the Policy Service **before** WBR, Lead Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager	Name:	Carl Griffiths
	Date:	11/01/2020
Reviewed by Policy Service	Name:	
	Date:	DD/MM/YY
Final version of the EIA sent to Policy Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Decision information sent to Policy Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	



## **Tenants incentive scheme**

### **Communications plan**

**Date: February 2020 – Ongoing**

### **Background**

Chesterfield Borough Council operates a Tenants Incentive Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to:

- Maximise the best use of housing stock
- Support tenants into the correct size and type of property
- Increase tenancy sustainment
- Support tenants where their welfare benefits do not cover their rent

The scheme encourages greater movement within our housing stock by offering an incentive for tenants to move to accommodation that meets their housing needs rather than remaining in unsuitable and oversized family accommodation.

The scheme also enables tenants to move in to existing adapted accommodation that meets their health needs rather than adapting their current accommodation.

If assistance is required to move to another property, the council can offer help including arranging removals, arranging the disconnection and reconnection of services, refitting of carpets, decorating and repayment of rent arrears.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the plan are:

- To inform council tenants of the scheme and encourage them to consider moving to smaller accommodation
- To highlight the benefits of the scheme for residents, the council and partnering organisations
- To increase internal awareness and to ensure that tenants are referred to the scheme where appropriate

### **Audience**

The target audience is:

- Existing tenants
- Potential new tenants
- Residents
- Chesterfield Borough Council staff
- Local media
- Councillors
- Partner organisations
- Voluntary / community sector

## **Strategy**

The communications plan will use a variety of different channels to promote the scheme, inform tenants of the benefits and encourage them to consider smaller accommodation.

**Departments leading the communications:** The communications team with assistance from the housing options team.

## **Channels**

The list below highlights the multi-channel approach that will be used to appropriately target messaging for audiences.

### **Chesterfield Borough Council channels:**

- Website – to include news stories, case studies and video content. The page for the scheme will also be updated or a new page will be created (<https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/housing/get-a-property/transfers-and-exchanges/transfer-incentive-scheme.aspx>)
- Corporate social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube – share new stories and videos
- Your Chesterfield – residents’ magazine – details of the scheme, the benefits and case studies
- aspire – inform staff of the scheme to raise internal awareness

### **Local and trade media: (Derbyshire Times, Peak FM etc.)**

- Press releases
- Interviews with the portfolio holder for housing /residents on the scheme as requested

### **Proactive messages for press releases**

- The scheme allows Chesterfield Borough Council to maximise the best use of housing stock, support tenants into the correct size and type of property, increase tenancy sustainment and support residents where their welfare benefit does not cover their rent.
- Chesterfield Borough Council will support tenants with the move, providing support and assistance when required including help to arrange removals, arranging disconnection and reconnection of services, arranging re-fitting carpets and paying off rent arrears.
- The scheme allows tenants to move to accommodation that meets their housing needs.
- The scheme enables tenants to move into adapted accommodation that meets their health needs rather than adapting their current accommodation.

### **Reactive messages – for media statements**

- Some tenants that are significantly under occupying family accommodation are at greater risk of rent arrears where their Welfare Benefits do not cover the rent liability. Through this scheme, Chesterfield Borough Council will support tenants by finding suitable, affordable accommodation.
- The level of the incentive payments available under the scheme has been considered. Benchmarking against similar schemes within other local authority areas have indicated that the payment amounts are reasonable and fit for purpose to enable the scheme to operate effectively.
- Any cost associated with the incentive support offered will be deducted from the total amount payable to the tenants.

Communications activity	Key contact	Content to be drafted by	Content to be published / shared by	Notes
Report to cabinet	Carl Griffiths / Liz Cook	N/A	N/A	25 February 2020
Draft text for leaflet	Sophie Guest / Carl Griffiths	March 2020	March 2020	
Design for leaflet	Sophie Guest / Carl Griffiths / Graphic Designer	March 2020	March 2020	
Draft text for website	Sophie Guest / Carl Griffiths / Sharon Simcox	February 2020	1 March 2020	Prepare text to go live from 1 March if approved
Draft text for mail shot	Sophie Guest / Carl Griffiths	March 2020	March 2020	

Staff briefing/aspire article	Sophie Guest	March 2020	March 2020	Article to be published on aspire – also send to housing team via email
Your Chesterfield content	Sophie Guest	25 February 2020	W/C 30 March 2020	Include details of partner agencies
Draft case study and record videos	Sophie Guest	February/March 2020	W/C 30 March 2020	Housing options team to identify a tenant to interview. To include in Your Chesterfield and on webpage.  1 video of tenant case study (if willing)  1 video of member or housing team talking about the benefits.
Schedule social media	Sophie Guest	March 2020		Include videos – social posts to be drafted based on video content
Additional case studies	Sophie Guest	Ongoing	Ongoing	Case studies with tenants who have benefited from the scheme to be carried out on an ad hoc basis and shared on the website/social media

Review of communications activities	Sophie Guest / Liz Cook / Carl Griffiths			Carry out review at catch up meeting in April. Update content as necessary and look at further opportunities for press release, case studies etc.
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