



# Public Document Pack Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Agenda

*Scrutiny making a positive difference: Member led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committee promote service improvements, influence policy development & hold Executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum*

**Thursday 22 February 2018 at 7.30 pm**

**conference room 2**

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

#### Membership

Councillor Adeleke  
Councillor Armytage  
Councillor Banks  
Councillor Mrs Bassadone  
Councillor Conway  
Councillor England  
Councillor P Hearn

Councillor Fethney  
Councillor Imarni (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mahmood (Chairman)  
Councillor Silwal  
Councillor Mills  
Councillor W Wyatt-Lowe

#### Substitute Members:

Councillors Howard, D Collins, Clark, Ransley, Tindall and Link

For further information, please contact

## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered -

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

### **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

### **5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

### **6. UPDATE ON THE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 3 - 14)**

### **7. DECANT POLICY (Pages 15 - 21)**



## AGENDA ITEM:

### SUMMARY

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Community Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>I</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	Housing Asset Management Strategy - Update
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Responsible Officer – Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director (Housing & Regeneration). Author - Fiona Williamson, Group Manager Property & Place
Purpose of report:	To present an update on the Housing Revenue Account, Asset Management Strategy.
Recommendations	For members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide observations and comments on the updates relating to the Housing Asset Management Strategy.
Corporate objectives:	<p>To ensure the management and maintenance of the housing portfolio is undertaken in accordance with best practice and is appropriate for the type, age and use of the stock.</p> <p>To consider national and local factors that could influence the optimal use of the housing stock in terms of value for money, the most economical use of resources and are reflective of the demand.</p> <p>To promote tenant involvement in deciding the priorities within the Asset Management Strategy.</p> <p>To provide assets of a consistent standard, allowing for differences in type of construction or archetype.</p> <p>To enable the delivery of new affordable homes, where individual sites are identified.</p>
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The Council will be required to deliver the Asset Management Strategy in line with the available budgets derived from revenue income and in line with the Housing Revenue Account</p>

<p>'Value For Money Implications'</p>	<p>Business Plan.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>The assessment to determine the optimal use of any of the assets will ensure that value for money is one of the criteria applied when considering a change of designation, remodelling or disposal.</p>
<p>Risk Implications</p>	<p>The Asset Management Strategy is essential as it will supplement the Business Plan and provide the framework for decision making to ensure the housing stock is viable and fit for purpose, both now and in the future.</p> <p>The risks associated with not developing an Asset Management Strategy are that investment is not targeted appropriately and the long term financial viability of the business model is undermined.</p>
<p>Equalities Implications</p>	<p>Equalities approach is outlined in the strategy</p>
<p>Health And Safety Implications</p>	<p>Compliance and Health and Safety are one of the key themes of the Asset Management Strategy and individual Health &amp; Safety plans will be developed for each project as required.</p>
<p>Consultees:</p>	<p>Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder Housing Tenant representatives.</p> <p>Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director Housing Landlord</p> <p>Simon Smith, Team Leader Assets and Business Improvement</p> <p>Layna Warden, Group Manager Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Natasha Beresford, Group Manager Strategic Housing</p> <p>David Barrett, Group Manager, Development</p>
<p>Background papers:</p>	<p>HRA Business Plan</p> <p>Cabinet Report 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Creation of additional units in Supported Housing Schemes &amp; the upgrade of communal facilities.</p> <p>HCOSC, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Housing Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>HCOSC 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013, Proposed changes to Government Rent Policy and impact on the HRA Business Plan</p>
<p>Historical background <i>(please</i></p>	<p>The Housing Asset Management Strategy was developed in 2016.</p>

<p><i>give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i></p>	<p>The Housing Asset Management Strategy is essential to outline the approach and priorities for the management and maintenance of a fit for purpose, social housing portfolio.</p> <p>The strategy was developed to incorporate a number of appendices, which are reviewed and updated to reflect changes to the stock composition as the result of Right to Buy, selective disposals and New Build.</p> <p>In addition, changes to the appendices are undertaken to reflect the wider context in terms of changes to Government Policy and Regulatory and Statutory compliance.</p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>HRA - Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>VfM - Value for Money</p>

## 1.0 Background summary

- 1.1 The Asset Management Strategy was developed in 2016 and outlines four key commitments regarding how the Council will deliver the ongoing management and maintenance of the Housing Assets.
- 1.2 The Asset Management Strategy is supported by a number of policies and the document was designed so that the appendices could be regularly updated to reflect changes in the number and type of stock, identify areas where investment has been made and to address external factors, such as the change in legislation.
- 1.3 The Asset Management Strategy continues to provide the overarching approach to the management of the assets, which is in part determined by the available budget derived from the Business Plan. In addition there are a range of Housing Strategies and policies that the Asset Management Strategy is designed to support. These include the following:
- The Housing Strategy
  - Adaptations Policy
  - Cross Tenure Energy Strategy
  - Development Strategy
  - Disposals Policy
  - Parking Policy
  - Empty Homes Policy and re-let standard
  - Mobility Scooter Policy
  - Asbestos Management Plan
  - Legionella Management Plan
  - Fire Safety Strategy

## 2.0 Capital Investment Programme

- 2.1 There have been a number of factors that have required the Business Plan to be amended, the 1% rent reduction, the phasing of the ongoing development programme and the decision not to provide shared ownership properties, all of which have impacted the available Capital budgets for investment in the existing stock.
- 2.2 The table below reflect the impact of these changes, since the original Asset Management Strategy was drafted and after smoothing the expenditure over the next five years.

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Original	£18.8M	£18.3M	£20.8M	£17.7M	£20.0M
Current	£17.48M	£17.74M	£17.05M	£17.02M	£17.06M

- 2.3 The reduction in available capital budgets, although not desirable can be accommodated by reprioritising some of the estate improvement works, as currently the stock is in good condition with 99.6% of the stock is identified as achieving the decent homes standard. This figure does include properties where tenants have refused to have work undertaken. The details of the breakdown are contained in Appendix D.
- 2.4 The Asset Management Strategy acknowledges the need to balance the priority for the provision of new social housing, against the need to manage and maintain the existing.

## 3.0 Data Management

- 3.1 There has been extensive work carried out around the management of data to ensure the Council is able to identify priority areas for investment and to demonstrate compliance in respect of health and safety and Decent Homes. The Decent Homes standard is still used as a benchmark for the overall condition and fitness for purpose of the stock, but this is likely to be supplemented with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation and Liability for Housing Standards) Bill that is currently going through Parliament.
- 3.2 The original Asset Management system Pimss4communities was reviewed in 2017 and due to ongoing delays in the introduction of an interface with the Orchard Housing Management System, an alternative system, Promaster, has been procured.
- 3.3 Promaster is contained within the Orchard suite of products and is designed to enable information to be visible through a web based system, which will enable contractors to have read only access to asbestos management records and in the future tenants will be able to access future investment programmes for their properties.

## 4.0 Health and Safety Risk Management

- 4.1 The second of the four visions; “Our tenants live in homes that are safe and maintained to the agreed standard” has always been a key priority for the service.

- 4.2 The main landlord risks are proactively managed and additional work has been undertaken to collate all fire risk assessments, legionella data and asbestos surveys, so that additional controls can be put in place to address any recommendations or legislative changes that are required following the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.



- 4.3 This has been further strengthened by the creation of a new Team Leader role for Compliance and Mechanical and Electrical Contracts and the appointment of an officer who is responsible for the management of asbestos within the housing stock. The information produced by this team informs the Asset Management Strategy so that investment in Health and Safety works is appropriate and in line with the priority risk ratings.

## **5.0 Investment options to generate additional revenue**

- 5.1 The Asset Team have commissioned a number of feasibility studies to develop or reconfigure existing properties, so that additional units can be delivered and generate revenue.
- 5.2 Currently approval has been granted to convert 3 sheltered schemes offices into additional accommodation, whilst improving the communal facilities at the schemes and the option to construct a 2 bedroomed house adjoining an existing property is at the pre-planning stage.
- 5.3 The 3 sheltered scheme projects will provide three flats suitable for wheelchair users at Great Sturgess Road, The Driftway and Old House Court Supported Housing Schemes. The provision of wheelchair friendly dwellings will enhance the quality of life for residents who require a totally suitable and adapted property, enabling them to live an independent lifestyle in an affordable property.
- 5.4 The project as well as delivering modern, comfortable and easily accessible facilities will also include new laundries and offices for the Supported Housing Officers for the tenants within the three schemes. The Driftway project will also provide a new Guest Room facility. These new facilities will be located centrally, enabling tenants to access more easily than the currently.

## **6.0 Tenant Involvement and Horizon Scanning**

- 6.1 The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee, supported by the various scrutiny groups have provided valuable insight into a number of areas which they have inspected, from which, tenant preferences and expectations have been established. In order for the Asset Management Strategy to be dynamic it is important that tenants are involved in shaping the service standards, so that there is a better understanding of expectations and priorities.
- 6.2 The Policy and Participation Team undertake ongoing horizon scanning to determine if there are any legislative, governance or statutory changes, which could impact the Asset Management Strategy, so that necessary amendments can be made to the forward planning of projects.
- 6.3 The Asset Management Strategy will continue to provide a flexible approach towards the management of the housing assets that will be able to respond to changes in National policy, whilst still ensuring that the local objectives are met wherever possible.



Housing Revenue Account Assets

\*10179 Properties

\*1764 Leaseholders

Communal drying areas & Communal gardens

HRA footpaths (generally those not adjacent to a highway)

HRA walls and fencing

Parking facilities and barriers

Scooter Stores & Bin Stores

Sheds

Lighting Columns (H and 3 digit number reference denotes HRA asset)

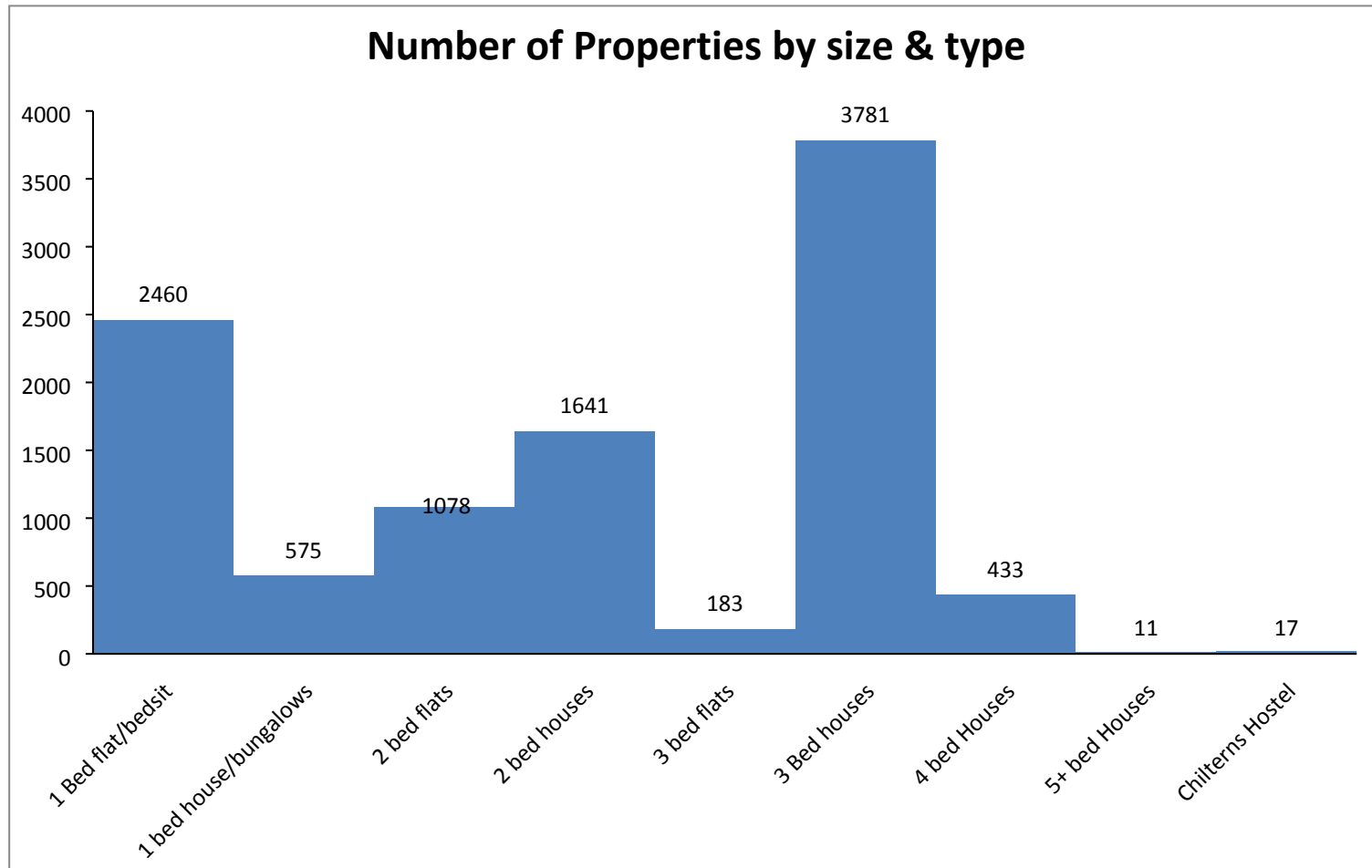
Amenity Greens

\*as at July 2017

# Appendix B

## Property by size and type

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## Appendix C

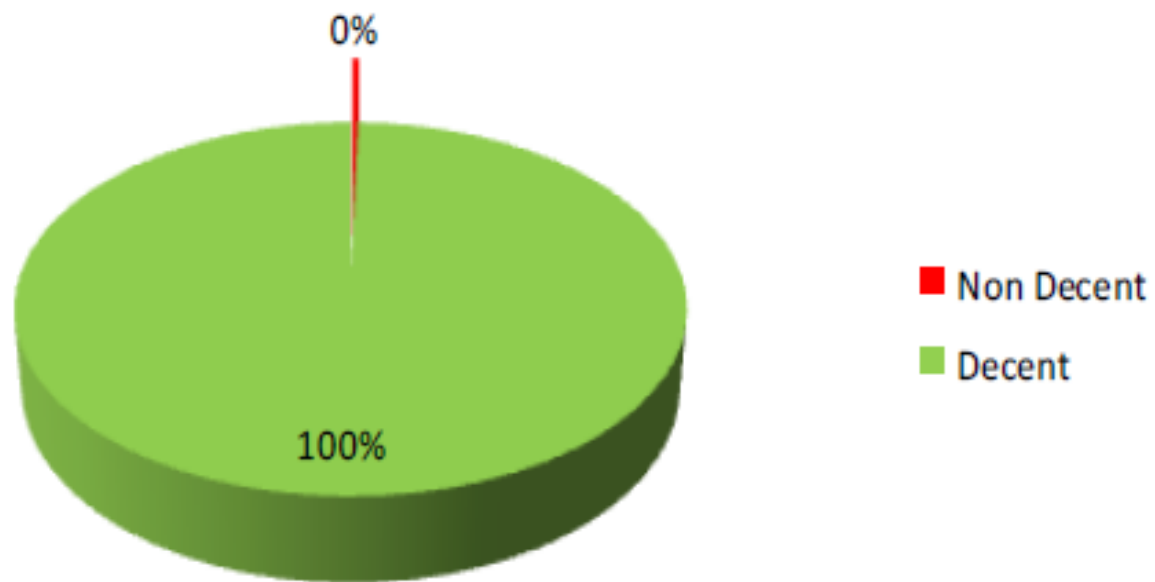
### Non- Traditional Properties

Type of Construction	No. of Properties (2016)
B.I.S.F (British Iron & Steel Federation	93
Wimpey No Fines	612
Quickbuild	191
Lovell Timber Frame	76
Drury System 3	5
Surebuilt	10
Guildway	15
Steel Framed	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1016</b>

## Appendix D

### Decent Homes

### Decent Home Stats



## Appendix D

### Decent Homes Data

- Potentially Non decent cost (over ten years): £55,803,080
- Average Potential Non decent cost per year: £5,580,308
  
- Non Decent Cost (failing one component) (over ten years): £23,615,940
- Average Non Decent Cost (failing one component) per year: £2,361,594

Stock: 10,179

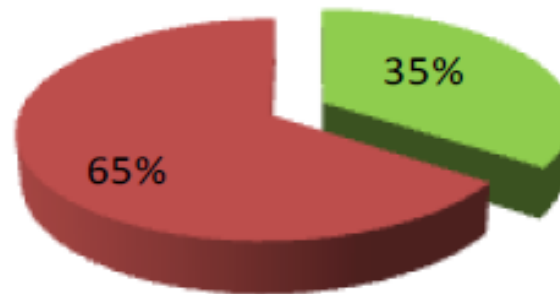
- Decent home figure: 10,138
- Non Decent figure: 41 (0.40%). This is due HHSRS failures, all of which are being addressed

# Appendix E

## Asbestos Data

### Asbestos Data

■ Properties with a survey: ■ Properties without a survey:



All communal areas have asbestos surveys and the above relates to individual domestic properties



**Agenda item:**

**Decant Policy**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Decant Policy</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing  Author/Responsible Officer – Lindsey Walsh, Team Leader Tenant and Leasehold
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	1. To provide Members with an overview of the draft Decant Policy and to provide the opportunity to scrutinise and provide feedback
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That members scrutinise and provide feedback.
<b>Corporate objectives:</b>	1. Affordable Housing
<b>Implications:</b>	<u>Financial</u>
<b>'Value for money' implications</b>	The review of the policy has allowed the Council to consider the financial Assistance given to tenants when a decant is necessary due to major works. The discretionary payment has been reduced from £800 per move to £400 making a 75% saving on each move the Council has to consider. In addition, those that can remain in situ whilst major works are carried out will not qualify for a compensation payment, nor will those tenants that opt to move permanently to a more suitable property.  <u>Value for money</u>
<b>Risk implications</b>	There are no risk implications
<b>Community Impact</b>	Community Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out*

Assessment	*Delete as applicable
Health and safety Implications	There are no health and safety implications
Consultees:	Margaret Griffiths Portfolio Leader Housing Elliott Brooks Assistant Director Housing Layna Warden Group Manager Tenant and Leasehold Housing Team Leaders
Background papers:	
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	A review of the Decant procedures and compensation allowance has been carried out in June 2002, February 2008 and February 2011.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	ASB = Antisocial behaviour

## Background

1. The Council last looked at their Decant Policy and Procedures in February 2011. The compensation levels at that time were benchmarked across several Social Housing Providers and it was agreed to offer £800 per move when a tenant had to move due to major works.
2. This compensation was paid for those that were moving on a temporary basis as well as those moving on a permanent basis to another property.
3. The Tenant would be offered a temporary transfer replicating the type of tenancy they had at their original tenancy. Their original tenancy was then terminated whilst major works were carried out. They were then offered their original property back by another transfer when all works had been completed.
4. As well as the compensation, the Council arranged for the removal and storage (packing if necessary) of personal items to the temporary accommodation and back to the original accommodation. This included:
  - a) Disconnect and reconnect the tenant's cooker
  - b) The Housing Landlord Service will also pay the tenant a lump sum of £800 to compensate for the following for each move (this list is not exhaustive):



- Redirection of mail
  - Removing/replacing carpets
  - Loss of earnings as a result of the decant
5. These allowances were also given to those tenants wishing to move on a permanent basis.
  6. The review of the policy and procedures has allowed the Council to reconsider the financial assistance given to tenants when a decant is necessary due to major works.
  7. The compensation (discretionary) payment has been reduced from £800 per move to £400 making a 75% saving on each move the Council has to consider. The Council will still arrange and pay for the tenant's removals and disconnect and reconnect appliances.
  8. In addition, those that can remain in situ whilst major works are carried out will not qualify for a compensation payment.
  9. Tenants that opt to move permanently to an alternative property will no longer qualify for compensation and the Council will not arrange and pay for their move. The Council will consider each case at the Housing Panel and offer suitable priority for the tenants to make a successful bid on a property instead. This will help to reduce costs but still give a good service to those tenants that have to move on a temporary basis.
  10. The new Decant Policy also provides temporary licenses at the Decant property instead of terminating the tenant's original tenancy. Tenants will keep their permanent tenancy agreement and continue to pay rent or have Housing Benefit to this home. They will be given a temporary licence to occupy the temporary home.
  11. The main advantage of not terminating the tenant's original tenancy is that any Court Orders will remain active for rent arrears and ASB issues if the tenancy remains in force. The Council have a duty to carry out repairs and we are unable to refuse these due to rent arrears, especially if the repairs required are a matter of health and safety. However, the compensation amount will be held back and paid onto the rent account of any tenant in arrears at the time of moving. Rent will still be due on their original tenancy and will be regarded as the tenant's principal home. Any direct debits for rent payments can continue as usual as will Housing Benefit payments. This reduces the inconvenience for tenants and DBC officers from notifying Housing Benefit, Council Tax and banks of new payment details.
  12. Monitoring the budget in 2018/2019 should show a reduction in costs due to the savings that the new Decant Policy provides. It should also reduce the need for ending and creating new tenancies and make it more straightforward for tenants and DBC Officers.



# Decant Policy

Last reviewed September 2017

# Policy for decanting tenants

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with government legislation.

## Contents

### 1.0 Policy overview

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Aims of the policy
- 1.3 Links to the Council's corporate aims
- 1.4 Equality and diversity
- 1.5 Policy statement(s)

### 2.0 Decant policy detail

- 2.1 Minimising disturbance
- 2.2 Assistance and discretionary payments
- 2.3 Tenancies, rent payments and council tax
- 2.4 Right to Buy and leaseholders

### 3.0 Links to other corporate strategies and policies

### 4.0 Legislation

## 1.1 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) housing service recognises that there will be occasions where we must ask tenants to move from their home on a temporary basis so that improvements or major repair work can take place. This is known as 'decanting'. A decant is always a temporary move and tenants will return to their home once works are complete.

If a tenant decides that they would rather move on a permanent basis, they are advised to [apply to the housing register](#) for a transfer.

## 1.2 Aims of the policy:

The aim of this policy is to;

- Clarify the approach taken by DBC housing service when it comes to decanting tenants;
- Ensure that disruption to tenants lives is kept to a minimum; and
- Ensure the delivery of a responsive and supportive service.

## 1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy contributes to the council's priorities of creating "a clean, safe and enjoyable environment" and "Providing good quality, affordable homes, in particular for those most in need", which are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

## 1.4 Equality and Diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

## 1.5 Policy statement(s):

We will aim to cause as little disturbance as possible to tenants who are required to decant under this policy (see 2.1)

We can offer assistance to tenants who are required to move under the decant policy (see 2.2).

We will offer support payments to tenants who move from their existing property under the decant policy (see 2.2).

Under a decant, tenants will maintain their tenancy in their original property and will be given a licence for the property they move into temporarily. (see 2.3).

Tenants will be expected to maintain rent payments on their original property. (see 2.3).

If a leaseholder is required to decant, they are not covered by this policy in terms of property allocation, support payments or assistance (see 2.4).

## 2.0 Decant policy detail

In some cases it may be decided that a tenant needs to move on a permanent basis, for example if:

- The property needs to be demolished or disposed of in line with the housing disposal policy; or
- The property size is to be altered and this will render it no longer suitable to the tenants housing needs.

In cases such as this, tenants will be moved in line with our disposals policy.

### 2.2 Assistance and discretionary payments

We will offer assistance to tenants when it comes to moving from one property to another. The housing service will:

- Arrange for the removal and storage of personal items;
- Arrange to disconnect and re-connect the tenants cooker;
- Help to lift and relay existing floor covering (where possible); and

We will offer a payment of £400 to tenants who are required to decant from their existing home, this payment should be used to offset any costs to the tenants as a result of the move i.e. additional travel costs, loss of earnings, and redirection of mail etc.

Where tenants are not required to move and works can be done whilst they continue to live in the property, they will not be entitled to a discretionary payment. Any payments made to the tenant will, in the first instance, be used to cover any outstanding debt owed to the housing service prior to being paid to the tenant.

Where a tenant may be considered vulnerable by the Housing Officer, the housing service may provide additional services to support the vulnerable tenant.

If the councils Medical Advisers state that the tenant or a member of their household is unable to remain in the property whilst works are being carried out, the housing service will encourage them to stay with relatives where possible.

### 2.3 Tenancies, rent payments and council tax

Existing tenancy types will be maintained throughout the decant process. If a tenant is required to move under a decant, then they will be given a license for their temporary home which will require no payment. Instead, rental payments on their original home will need to be maintained.

Tenants will be expected to pay the appropriate council tax for the property they have been moved to. Council tax will not need to be paid for the property they have been decanted or moved from (as long as this property is considered to be empty).

### 2.4 Right to Buy and Leaseholders

If required to decant, any outstanding Right to Buy applications will remain valid, however the property may be subject to needing a revaluation depending on the extent and type of works carried out during the decant process.

If a leaseholder is required to decant, we will not offer them an alternative property, assistance with moving or discretionary payments. They will be advised to make their own arrangements and claim any alternative housing costs via their insurance.

### 2.1 Minimising disturbance

Where possible we will aim to carry out necessary works around tenants, while they remain in their property, with the minimum of disruption. If work is not able to be carried out while the tenant remains in their property, we will aim to make the decant period as short as possible. In deciding whether a tenant can remain in the property during works the following will be considered:

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- The health and safety of those living in or visiting the property;
- Proposed timescales for and extent of works; and
- Any potential security issues.

If required to move, we will aim for all tenants to be offered a suitable property for their needs. We will ensure that accommodation is provided with similar adaptations where an individual has particular needs and their existing home has been specially adapted. Tenants who live in properties larger than their housing needs require may be decanted into a smaller property which is deemed suitable for them in line with our housing allocations policy.

If an emergency decant is required (i.e. in the case of fire or flood) we may need to place tenants in temporary accommodation and therefore this may not be of the same suitability as their decanted property.

## 3.0

### Links to other corporate strategies and policies

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Allocations Policy
- Housing Disposals Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

## 4.0

### Legislation

The legislation and policies listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 1985,
- Housing Act 1985
- Land Compensation Act 1973
- Planning & Compensation Act 1991
- Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) (England) Regulations 2008
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2006