

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Housing and Health Committee****25 January 2017****Review of Clean and Clear Incentive Scheme – Introduction of new Clean and Green (Recycle and Reuse Scheme)****Report by Director (Housing and Social Work)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report proposes to replace the housing service's existing Clean and Clear Incentive with a scheme which promotes the reuse and recycling of items as people leave and move into council housing. This change would bring the Housing Service more in line with the Scottish Government's targets for recycling and reducing waste and supports the Council's aims of reducing land infill and recycling by 2020.

1. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 An initiative was introduced by housing services in 2011 to encourage tenants who were moving out of Council properties to leave their homes in a good state of repair and remove all their personal and household items. The scheme was presented to Housing and Health Committee in June 2011 who approved the introduction of a Clean and Clear incentive to reward tenants with a £100 payment for leaving their home in a clean and clear condition (Report 250/11).
- 1.2 In order to receive the payment, tenants had to meet the following criteria:-
 - The property and garden area is free from rubbish and personal property, including sheds, cellars, attics and communal areas
 - A full set of keys (and door entry fobs where applicable) is returned the day the tenancy ends
 - The tenant's rent account is clear and there is no other debt to the Council
 - The outgoing tenant leaves a forwarding address
 - There are no rechargeable repairs
 - Utility meters are clear of any debt
- 1.3 One of the key drivers for the Clean and Clear incentive was to enable a quick turnaround of properties when they became vacant (void). In 2011 we took an average of 35 days to re-let empty properties, compared to our current performance of 23 days. This is now an area of sustained improvement and one in which we compare very well against the Scottish average of 36 days. The section below highlights the fact that there has been a low take-up of the clean and clear initiative, but this has not had an adverse effect on our void targets and performance.

- 1.4 Since approval in 2011, 3,480 Council homes have become available for re-let but only 210 tenants benefitted from the incentive, a 6% uptake. Although the majority of tenants leave their tenancy in a good state of repair, not all meet the criteria above or have taken advantage of the initiative.
- 1.5 Based on the above and the need to encourage more recycling and reuse of household items, as well as acknowledging the financial challenges facing many tenants, it is proposed that the Clean and Clear Incentive Scheme is replaced with a policy which promotes re-use and recycle, and in turn, financial inclusion and support.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 One of the drawbacks of the Clean and Clear Incentive is that on many occasions outgoing tenants are simply disposing of goods which are in a serviceable condition. The Scottish Government has set ambitious recycling targets for Local Authorities with the target for 2020 set to reuse/ recycle/ compost 60% of household waste collected. In 2015 Perth and Kinross Council achieved 54.2% and in that year collected 661 tonnes of fridges/freezers and large domestic appliances of which only 41.2 tonnes (6.2%) were sent for re-use. To put that in context, in one month alone 509 fridge freezers were collected at Recycling Centres but only 36 were sent for re-use.
- 2.2 Given these targets, the housing service now wants to promote the reuse and recycling of household goods, such as white goods, furniture and floor coverings which are left by vacating tenants. This will have two benefits: supporting the wider re-cycling targets and helping new tenants who don't have one or more of these goods when they move in to their property and who may have limited finances to purchase them.
- 2.3 It is therefore proposed that where goods are left by an outgoing tenant or where they indicate that they simply intend to dispose of them, an agreement will be reached for them to be left within the property. The goods will have to be clean and serviceable and generally in reasonable condition and the ingoing tenant will sign a disclaimer in relation to taking over responsibility for the goods including any subsequent repairs issues.
- 2.4 Colleagues in The Environment Service support the Council's proposed change in policy, noting that "encouraging greater re-use of items is a key part of Zero Waste Scotland's work on creating a circular economy, where products and materials stay in the highest value state for as long as possible. Reuse also brings economic and social benefits, creating jobs and training opportunities, realising the full economic values of products and helping to provide a source of affordable goods and equipment to start-up businesses and households."
- 2.5 For tenants who need help to purchase household goods to furnish their home, there is an option to apply for a Community Care Grant administered by colleagues in the Scottish Welfare Fund Team. The grant is discretionary and may be granted to tenants in receipt of qualifying benefits such as

income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and income-related Employment Support Allowance and who meet certain circumstances e.g. are a family facing exceptional pressure.

- 2.6 The proposal in this paper will mean that potentially fewer tenants will need to apply for a community care grant to purchase goods as these may be available to them through re-cycling. This could mean that smaller grants are issued, enabling an increase in the number of grants being paid out.
- 2.7 Colleagues administering the Welfare Fund support these proposals acknowledging that one of the principles of the Fund is to help people establish and maintain a settled home. Reusing and recycling goods would be an opportunity to reduce demand on the Fund which would then enable it to be used to help support people already in settled tenancies, potentially preventing the need for other services to intervene.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The report highlights the low level of take-up of the housing service's Clean and Clear Incentive which was introduced several years ago. In the intervening years there has been more focus and priority given to recycling and reducing waste in recognition of the impact of the damage to the environment of our consumer society. In addition, the previous policy encouraged tenants to dispose of goods if they no longer needed or wanted them, rather than encouraging them to be passed on and reused by new tenants. The new policy proposed in the paper is promoted as more beneficial to tenants and to the wider environment.

3.2 Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report.
- (ii) Approve the new policy to focus on re-use and recycle as people leave or move into Council homes, replacing the Clean and Clear initiative.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	No
Corporate Plan	No
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate plan 2013-18 have five concurrent outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. The following are relevant to this report:-

- Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

As above

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The proposals in this report will result in a refocus of the Welfare Fund, potentially benefitting more applicants.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications regarding this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no asset management implications regarding this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matter presented in this report. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 The reuse and recycling of household goods in empty properties, rather than disposal to waste and recycling centres, promotes a more sustainable approach.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications of this report.

Risk

- 3.6 The Housing and Community Care Senior Management Team regularly review capital monitoring reports that highlight individual project progress and risks.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Heads of Finance and Legal Services have been consulted on this report.

External

- 4.2 The Tenant Committee Reporting Panel was consulted on the report. They commented that “the panel think this is an excellent idea but need more details and clarification of how this will work.”

5. Communication

- 5.1 The proposal in this report will be highlighted in a future edition of ‘Housing Matters’.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to the Housing and Health Committee, 1 June 2011 – Void Property Clean and Clear Incentive

3. APPENDICES

None