



Meeting Business and Housing Policy Committee
Date and Time Tuesday, 11th February, 2020 at 6.30 pm.
Venue King Charles Hall, Guildhall, Winchester

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y A G E N D A

The following item was not notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. Therefore, the Chairperson will need to decide whether or not to accept this item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration.

Agenda Item.

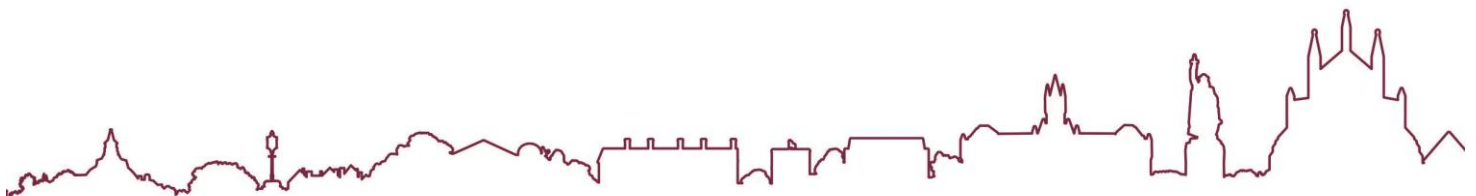
9. Review of downsizing incentive scheme - Presentation (Pages 3 - 14)

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Lisa Kirkman
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5 February 2020

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Downsizing Incentive Scheme WCC Tenants

Amber Russell – Service Lead



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

 Downsizing scheme introduced in 2013

 Aims of the scheme:

Best use of Housing Stock


To promote and enable downsizing – providing more manageable homes

Align with national Housing Benefit sanctions, prevent rent arrears, homelessness

Guard against the detrimental affect of arrears to the service provision

Enable and support tenants to resolve financial hardship - offer of financial support with the cost of moving expenses etc.

More efficient use of the Disabled Adaptation Budget tenants

 Monetary incentive of £1,000 and/or services to the value to support moving, including:

Removals, Packing & Unpacking

New Furniture, Furnishings & Carpets (as appropriate)

Decoration of new property

Re-connection of cooker and washing machine.

Handyman help



Support organising re-direction of post, change of address notifications, dealing with utilities companies and registering with local services in new community

The Lifeline Service

 Eligibility – Any WCC tenant who downsizes (transfer or mutual exchange) by at least one bedroom

- Originally - budget of £100,000 available with a dedicated officer managing the scheme and providing assistance – tenant caseworker approach
- Currently - a budget of £60,000 available with support split across officers within the Tenancy Team – scheme facilitation approach
- June 2018 incentive increased to £2,500 – part of Victoria Court new homes development programme
- Maximum incentive for those moving to a property which meets assessed bedroom need, otherwise £1,000 still applies

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No. downsize moves	67	60	46	33	48	46	28 (to date)

-  Initially prioritised for tenants affected by Welfare Reform
-  Promoted in a variety of ways – specific events, articles in Tenant Voice, letters, website, personal contact by SHOs, leaflets

Feedback from tenants who downsized – what motivated tenants to use the scheme?

“Made redundant, struggling financially, children left home, other residents had made comments about under occupying. Incentive helped, location most important factor”







“Marriage breakdown, too many memories in the home, children left home, property too big. Incentive was useful but not the only reason for moving”

“Disabled, couldn’t get up stairs, garden too big, living alone. Incentive not the reason for moving, wanted specific location”

“Health issues, couldn’t cope in property. Incentive was important as had rent arrears to clear”

“Property too big, too many memories following death of spouse. Incentive did help for funeral costs, location was important”

- 50 WCC tenants on the Housing Registered - Band 2 priority for downsizing
- 1 or 2 bedroom need
- Living in 2 and 3 bedroom properties (one 4 bed)
- Predominantly over 60 years
- Majority wanting general needs accommodation
- Number with medical issues, property unsuitable due to health etc.
- Further contact exploring reasons for registering – specific location often a priority

-  Over 500 known cases under occupying
-  Concern with accuracy and completeness of data
-  Personalised leaflet to encourage contact
-  Initially targeting those in 4 bedroom properties
-  Phase roll out to others depending on response rate and feedback
-  Mindful of budget restrictions and availability of suitable move on properties to move on to

[NAME] HAVE YOU CONSIDERED DOWNSIZING?



Financial help for Winchester City Council tenants wishing to downsize. If you are considering moving to a smaller home then we can help you.

A cash payment is available for you if you downsize or if you prefer, we can use it to arrange things on your behalf, such as:

- Removals, packing & unpacking
- New furniture, furnishings & carpets
- Decorating
- Reconnection of appliances
- Handyman help
- Redirection of post, change of address notifications, dealing with utilities companies and registering with local services

What are the benefits of moving to a smaller home?

Your housing needs may have changed and you could now have 'spare' bedrooms which you no longer need. Some of the benefits of moving to a smaller home include:

- Reduced bills e.g. council tax, utilities
- A garden that's easier to manage
- Freeing up a larger home for a family that needs it

Whatever the reason for wanting a smaller property, we would like to help. We will be contacting you shortly or you can contact us on:

01962 848 197

Winchester City Council's Housing Tenancy Team or by email

housingtenancy@winchester.gov.uk

We are happy to explain the downsizing scheme to you, check that you qualify and see whether this is something you would like to take up.

You can also apply online at www.winchester.gov.uk/downsize by completing the online contact form. Or call into the Council office if you don't have access to the internet or a phone and want to talk to an advisor. An advisor will contact you as soon as possible after receiving your enquiry.



MANY OF OUR TENANTS EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS OF DOWNSIZING. HERE IS MRS GUY'S STORY.








CASE STUDY – Mrs Guy

I lived in a large, family home owned by Winchester City Council for 53 years, raising my 6 children. I had many happy times however the time came to consider moving to a smaller property. My health was deteriorating, the stairs were causing me an issue and my family recommended that I move before my health became worse. They helped me register on Hampshire Home Choice in readiness for the ideal property to become available. I had a clear idea what I wanted, to remain in the same town with my independence still in tact.

Unfortunately my health deteriorated and I was admitted to hospital and then my son spotted the ideal property. He worked with Winchester City Council Officers once a bid had been placed and I was successful, so I could find out more about the bungalow. My son met Officers at the property when it became vacant and took lots of photographs which he showed me in hospital. I accepted the property and the Housing Officer completed the paperwork in hospital with me. The incentive payment was extremely useful, I was unable to take my large furniture with me so I bought new furniture for the bedroom and living room and new curtains throughout.

I wish I had moved years ago, I would say don't be frightened of letting go, look to the future and have that leap of faith. I accept I am really lucky to have the support of my family, not everyone does, however Winchester City Council can assist with completing an application for Hampshire Home Choice, they can bid on your behalf and offer support during and after the move.



-  Is the downsizing scheme still relevant?
-  Should a dedicated resource be in place to manage and promote the scheme?
-  Are the incentives still relevant – financial and support services?
-  Should the incentives offer more/less?
-  Are other factors just as important – direct matching to properties?
-  What groups are a priority – 4 bed properties, older persons households any others?
-  Further research / consultation needed

Questions



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