

# Appendix A

## Transfer Incentive Scheme Policy

### 1. Introduction

Tandridge District Council has a limited supply of social housing and has, for a number of years, promoted an under-occupation incentive scheme in order to free up much needed family-sized accommodation.

It is evident that there is a significant shortage of accommodation for families, particularly properties with three or more bedrooms. This shortage is much less apparent in our stock of one -bedroom properties generally. Furthermore, there still appears to be a relative over-supply of older persons' stock in relation to demand.

### 2. Strategic Aims

There is a need to make more effective use of our stock in order to meet known demand, and in particular to avoid any long-term reliance on Bed & Breakfast and other unsuitable temporary accommodation for homeless families

### 3. Objectives

The aims of the Transfer Incentive Scheme are therefore to:

- encourage and assist tenants under-occupying general needs Council accommodation to move to more widely available accommodation;
- release general needs accommodation, particularly three and four-bedroom properties, in order to maximise occupancy; and
- improve the letting rate of lower demand properties

### 4. Target

To achieve a minimum of 5 under-occupation transfers during 2022/23 with future targets being reviewed in the light of take-up and budgetary provision.

### 5. Eligibility

A Transfer Incentive Grant will be available to those persons who:

- (i) are currently residing in Tandridge as secure tenants of the Council and occupy a dwelling suitable for use by a family; **and**
- (ii) qualify, in accordance with the current Housing Allocation Scheme, to occupy accommodation that has less bedrooms than their current home; **and**
- (iii) agree to transfer to accommodation described in (ii) above and provide vacant possession of their present home.
- (iv) assured tenants of Registered Provider (RP) properties in the District will also be eligible for the Grant, providing that written confirmation that the Council will be entitled to nominate the new tenant for the resulting vacancy, has been received from their landlord

### 6. Exclusions

A Transfer Incentive Grant will not be available to those persons:

- (i) against whom the Council has commenced legal proceedings;

- (ii) are licensees or non-secure tenants of the Council;
- (iii) are in rent arrears and reasonable repayment of the debt cannot be negotiated.
- (iv) Hold a flexible fixed term tenancy with less than two years remaining on the fixed term

## **7. Incentive Payment**

Fixed incentive payments will be paid at the following rates to those transferring from family-sized general needs accommodation to occupy accommodation that has less bedrooms than their current home:

- A £5,000 incentive grant to tenants moving to one-bedroom or bedsit accommodation; or
- A £2,000 incentive grant to tenants moving to a two-bedroom property

The above payments will be subject to budget limits. If there are more requests for transfer incentive grants than there is funding available, the Council will:

- give priority to those moving from accommodation that is more urgently needed, particularly three and four-bedroom properties; and/or
- assist with a transfer in the next financial year.

## **8. What does the payment cover and when will it be paid?**

The disturbance payment is a fixed amount to assist with the reasonable costs of moving home - removals, connection and disconnection of services replacement carpets and curtains etc. Tenants will not be expected to submit invoices or receipts to receive this payment.

The Council reserves the right to reduce the payments set out in paragraph 5 above by:

- the amount of rent arrears owed to the council at the time of transfer; and/or
- the cost of any works that the Council has to undertake to the vacated premises as a result of damage or neglect on the part of the tenant. This matter is dealt with in more detail in the Council's Conditions of Tenancy. and/or
- the value of any disturbance payment previously paid (eg – for a tenant moving from a two-bedroom property to a one-bedroom property who has previously received a payment for moving from a three-bedroom property to a two-bedroom property)

Payments will be authorised once the tenant has moved and following an inspection of the vacated property.

## **9. Financial Resources**

The annual budget for the existing scheme is currently £25,000. The scheme will be kept under review and the need for any additional funding will be dealt with as part of the annual budget setting process.

## **10. Exceptions**

In some exceptional circumstances, where a family-size dwelling is urgently required, the Head of Housing may offer a Transfer Incentive Grant in relation to accommodation other than that described in paragraph 5. above, or may agree to some additional work being undertaken to the smaller unit, in order to secure the desired accommodation.

## **11. Policy Implementation**

This policy shall come into effect on 1 July 2022. Thereafter, the Housing Committee will review the policy every three years unless there is some event, consideration or legislative change, which necessitates an earlier review.

July 2022