

THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

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| Name of Officer: | Ashley Jackson, Head of Housing and Planning |
| Directorate: | Housing and Planning |
| Relevant Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Helen Whitehead, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Date of Decision | 18 March 2024 |
| Subject of decision: | Increase in Landlord Incentive Scheme |
| Call-in Deadline: | N/A |

Decision made:

The decision has been made to increase the landlord incentive scheme for private landlord/letting agents to the following:

| Current rates from January 2020 | | | Proposed | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | 6 months | 12 months | 6 months | 12 months |
| Room | £750 | £1,250 | £750 | £1,500 |
| Studio/1 bed | £1,000 | £1,500 | £1,000 | £1,750 |
| 2 bed | £1,000 | £1,500 | £1,000 | £1,750 |
| 3 bed | £1,250 | £1,750 | £1,250 | £2,500 |
| 4 bed | £1,250 | £1,750 | £1,250 | £2,500 |

It has also been decided to have additional flexibility to be able to offer 3+ months' in advance for landlords agreeing to house larger households i.e. Requiring 4 bedrooms or more.

Securing properties without this additional flexibility is particularly difficult if there was a household requiring 4 bedrooms or more and there are also additional medical needs, i.e. 2nd WC requirement/ground floor bedroom requirement. These properties are rarer/in high demand, therefore when there is a vacancy, there is a need to ensure that the Council has the financial ability to be able to secure these properties.

Reasons for the Decision:

The decision has been made to increase the landlord incentive scheme for private landlords/letting agents due heavily relying on the private rental sector to discharge our prevention/relief duty to households. The landlord incentive scheme was first introduced in 2018 and was last reviewed in 2020. Since the last review we have seen an increase in the rents charged within the private rental market as well as Landlords selling properties due to changes in legislation and also an increase in Air BnBs due to being a coastal town.

To ensure we continue delivering positive results discharging our duties housing people into suitable and affordable housing within the private market we have had to review our landlord incentive scheme to ensure we are taking into consideration the current climate and offering landlords/letting agents an incentive to encourage them working with our clients who don't have guarantors and the finances to pay multiple rent in advance.

Alternative options considered and why they were rejected when the decision was made:

It has been considered to leave the landlord incentive scheme as it is as per the rates above but this would be a huge risk to the department given the current cost of living crisis as well as other local authorities being able to offer more to private landlord/letting agents and them deciding to no longer working with Thanet resulting in the hard work the prevention team have put in to building up these professional relationships coming to an end.

This would also have a negative impact on our positive outcomes as we would see a significant reduction in discharging our duty under prevention and relief which would lead to more clients ending up in temporary accommodation which would have a financial impact on the temporary accommodation budget and also an even bigger reliance on the housing register.

The Council also considered attracting landlords from other parts of the UK however this can be difficult considering other Local Authorities are competing in the same way. We do struggle to encourage applicants to move out of the area and away from their support networks, so this may not meet the gap in demand but is an option some households may consider.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by any executive Member who has been consulted by the officer making the decision and of any dispensation granted to that executive Member by the Head of Paid Service:

None

Please attach any report considered when making the decision (if applicable):

Updated Landlord Incentive business case

If you are aware this decision relates to a previous decision, please advise who took that decision and approximately when the decision was taken:

None

Statement if decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in:

None