

**DECENT & AFFORDABLE HOMES PDG
26 JANUARY 2016**

GARAGE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Cabinet Member Cllr Ray Stanley
Responsible Officer Housing Services Manager

Reason for Report: To review the Garage Management Policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S): Cabinet approves the revised Garage Management Policy.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Council must run the Housing Service efficiently and effectively in accordance with legislative requirements and the provisions of the regulatory framework.

Financial Implications: Income from Garage and Garage Ground Rent Plots (GGRP) is accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account and supports housing expenditure.

Legal Implications: Having a clearly defined policy ensures consistency of approach.

Risk Assessment: Failure to provide housing management staff with the appropriate policies could result in a less consistent and effective service.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The review of this policy reflects changes in good practice and allows for any legislative changes to be updated accordingly. It will provide a framework for staff which sets out how they will respond to and manage queries relating to renting a garage or GGRP.
- 1.2 The Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide garages or GGRP's. However, the provision of parking facilities helps to free up congestion on roads, promote safer communities and prevents access problems on estates due to overcrowding of vehicles.
- 1.3 The Garage Management Policy was adopted at the meeting of the Decent and Affordable Homes Policy Development Group in June 2011. The policy was due to be reviewed by May 2015.
- 1.4 Tenants Together approved the draft Garage Management Policy at their meeting on 9 July 2015.
- 1.5 Members are asked to consider the proposed changes and agree the adoption of the reviewed policy.

2.0 Proposed policy changes

- 2.1 The reviewed policy has been updated to reflect changes in good practice and recent amendments made to the Tenancy Changes Policy (previously known as Succession and Assignment Policy).
- 2.2 Age restrictions have been applied to renting a garage or GGRP to those applicants aged 18 years or over. Previously, minors aged 16 and 17 were permitted to rent a garage or GGRP on condition they had a guarantor acting on their behalf. These changes are reflected in the policy due to the low number of tenancies we grant and the complications associated with renting a GGRP to those aged under 18 years old.
- 2.3 The management of garages is not subject to the same legislation as the management of social housing which means that the Council has more discretion in terms of the development of policy relating to this area. Therefore we have used our discretion as to whether or not we grant a new tenancy in cases where a former tenant has breached their tenancy, for example, non-payment of rent.
- 2.4 Provision has also been made so that a prospective tenant may view a garage or GGRP prior to signing up for the tenancy. However, the policy has been revised so that if the prospective tenant does not return the keys or lose them, they will be recharged for the replacement of any locks or keys.
- 2.5 The policy emphasizes the use of a garage or GGRP should not be used for living accommodation.
- 2.6 The policy has introduced a new clause on the demolition of garages for development. This will allow the Council to demolish individual and blocks of garages and GGRP's where there is a requirement due to a health and safety risk or where a business case is in place to develop the site.
- 2.7 The policy has been amended so that family members who succeed to the tenancy in the event of death, have additional time to take on or refuse the tenancy. These timescales have been changed from 10 to 28 days.

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Circulation of the Report: Councillor Ray Stanley, Management Team

List of Background Papers: A copy of such papers to be made available for public inspection and included on Website