



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Housing Benefit Reform- Supported Housing

Date: 1 September 2011

Author: Strategic Housing Manager

1. Purpose of the Report

§ To inform Cabinet of the above public consultation paper on Housing Benefit reform – Supported Housing and consider any response to that consultation.

2. Background

The Department for Work and Pensions has produced draft proposals for changes in the administration of housing benefit for those people who live in supported housing.

The purpose of the reform is to change the administration of housing benefit in such a way that it can ,more effectively help those people with specialist housing needs who commonly live in specialist supported housing or adapted housing.

The proposals go on to split supported housing into 2 main types

Type 1 – lower levels of care and personal support – these would be hostels, refuges, foyers and purpose built sheltered housing. E.g. Elizabeth House and Bond Street.

Type 2 – intensive levels of support and personal care – these would be purpose built units of accommodation providing a considerably higher level of support than needed by people in type 1 e.g. people with a severe mental impairment and, or learning disabilities.

The proposal is that the support element of the rental charge is removed and paid for as an additional amount which would be added onto the local housing allowance rate for properties. The proposals suggest that for type 1

accommodation housing benefit would be paid at the local housing allowance plus a pre set amount to cover the care element of the charge. For type 2 properties they would also receive the local housing allowance, but the amount they received for the care / support element of their weekly charge would be determined by 'local authority officials' and not those officers processing the housing benefit claim.

Overall the consultation document advises that the reforms are not looking to cut expenditure, but to better direct it.

Officers are currently working through these proposals and will also be liaising with neighbouring local authorities and local supported accommodation providers to formulate a response.

Responses are required by the 9th October 2011. Should members be minded to respond to the consultation, a response will be prepared by the Strategic Housing Manager, on behalf of and in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Health and Wellbeing and Finance and Performance.

3.Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to: -

- Note the report
- Put forward any comments to inform any consultation response.