

**Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**ITEM 3****DELEGATED DECISION****30 JULY 2019****DRAFT DOWNSIZING INCENTIVES POLICY**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Long - Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Report Sponsor: Michael Kelleher  
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**Executive Summary:**

There is an under supply of family homes in Milton Keynes.

The implementation of a Downsizing Incentives Policy would support tenants to downsize from under occupied family Council homes to smaller homes that better meet their needs. Therefore, increasing the number of larger properties that are available to those in need and making the best use of social housing.

This report recommends agreeing the draft Downsizing Incentives Policy for consultation.

**Councillor Nigel Long**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration**

**1. Recommendation(s)**

1.1 That an 8 week public consultation of the draft Downsizing Incentives Policy consultation be agreed.

**2. Issues**

2.1 There are currently 827 households registered for alternative accommodation of 2 bedrooms or more under the Allocation Policy (Bands 1-3). There are 539 Milton Keynes Council tenants subject to bedroom tax for having at least 1 bedroom larger than their housing need.

2.2 Levels of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation have risen since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act on 3 April 2018. The number of homeless applications received during 2018/19 was 3,436, an increase of 140% on the number of applications received in 2017/18 (1,349).

2.3 There are currently 795 households in temporary accommodation, a rise of 23% on the number in temporary accommodation at 3 April 2018 (646). Of those 795 households in temporary accommodation, 588 require family accommodation of more than 2 bedrooms.

- 2.4 At the same time, the number of affordable social rented properties to let has reduced. Both the available supply of Council properties to let and housing association homes available to the Council for letting have reduced, and the cost of renting a home in the private sector is rising faster than the average household income.

A Downsizing Incentives Policy is required to increase the availability of larger family accommodation and make the best use of social housing to meet demand. A copy of the draft policy is attached at the Annex.

### 3. Options

- 3.1 Do nothing. This option does not address the increasing need for larger homes for families and the increase in the use of temporary accommodation and length of time families spend in temporary accommodation.
- 3.2 Approve the policy for consultation. This option will give us the opportunity to consult with the public, service users and key partners to develop an effective policy, in order to make best use of social housing and increase the supply of larger family homes.

### 4. Implications

#### 4.1 Policy

- 4.2 This policy should be considered alongside the Council's Allocation Policy.

#### 4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.3 If 10% of those registered on the Allocation Policy under occupying Council accommodation took up an incentive to move, the cost would be estimated at £130k. A HRA budget pressure will be presented for 2020/21 budget setting.

- 4.4 It is anticipated that the implementation of this policy would also support a reduction in the use of temporary accommodation for families and therefore the average nightly cost for temporary accommodation would reduce.

N	Capital	Y	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	Y	Medium Term Plan	N	Asset Management

#### 4.3 Other Implications

Y	Equalities/Diversity	N	Sustainability	Y	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

**Annex:** Draft Downsizing Incentives Policy