

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2013  
title: ALTERATIONS TO LANDLORD TENANT GRANT POLICY  
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To change the Landlord Tenant grant policy with a view to encourage landlords to develop single flats for tenants under 35 years old.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To address the identified housing need.
  - Corporate Priorities – To assist the working population.
  - Other Considerations – To be able to offer all ages a housing option.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Part of the Welfare Reform measures have capped the maximum amount a young person under 35 years can claim in housing benefit. Previously young people up to 25 years old could only claim a single room rate, however this has been increased and now applies to up to 35 year olds. This has had a significant impact on the housing options available for up to 35 year olds as there is limited private rented 1-bed accommodation that is affordable in the borough.
- 2.2 For over 10 years Ribble Valley Borough Council have offered grant assistance to private landlords on the condition that for 5 years, the property is let out at an affordable rent. Any breach of the grant condition will result in the grant being repaid. The grant is registered as a legal charge on the property.

## 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 This restriction limits the options available for households under 35 years to an offer from Ribble Valley Homes. There are very limited, if any, private rented properties where the landlord would accept a single room rate of £53.50 per week or £230 per calendar month.

## 4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 To encourage private landlords to develop 1-bed accommodation and accept the lower rent levels, it is proposed that the grant rate is increased for this type of accommodation. The current grant policy restricts flat development to a maximum of £10,000 grant or 50% of the total cost of the works and the condition that the local housing allowance rent level is charged on completion. The rent level for a single self-contained unit is £335 per calendar month. The proposal is to increase the amount of grant available to £15,000 per unit on the condition the Landlord will

accept the lower monthly rent of £231. This will provide affordable 1-bed accommodation for under 35 year olds, which is in high demand.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Utilise the current landlord tenant budget.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Grants will be processed as existing.
- Political – Important to provide an option for young people in the borough.
- Reputation – The Council is acknowledging the difficulty faced by young people in seeking housing.
- Equality and Diversity – Households of all ages will be treated fairly.

#### 5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Accepts the proposed changes to the landlord tenant grant scheme and allow an increased grant level for landlords willing to develop 1-bed accommodation where they accept the single room rate.

5.2 The increased grant amount will be available from April 2013.

5.3 The lower rate will still be available for landlords developing 2 bed flats.

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