

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Housing & Environment DATE: 25 August 2011

DIRECTOR: Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT: Furniture Scheme

REPORT NUMBER: H&E/11/196

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for changes to the Furniture Scheme that was approved by Committee on 24 August 2010 and ratified by the Finance & Resources Committee on 28 September 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee approve:
- A service charge for the Furniture Service of £1.50 per £100 of goods;
 - That applicants for the Service may choose which items they prefer up to a maximum of £600 for individuals or £900 for families, and,
 - To remit this to Finance & Resources Committee for approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Initial funding for the Furniture Scheme will come from the Homelessness Service budget.
- 3.2. Over several years the Scheme will become self financing.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 4.1. The proposal links to the Single Outcome Agreement and Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking to 'increase the number of temporary homes for homeless people across the City' and 'retain the 24 hours contact point for homeless people'. It also links to the National Indicator and Target 'All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012'.
- 4.2. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
- 4.3. The proposals will assist the Council to deliver against, in particular, one of the five key areas of activity – the services we provide and secure for the most vulnerable members of our community.
- 4.4. There are direct links to the Housing Service Plan 2009 – 2012 –

Modernisation of Service, the Resettlement & Homelessness Strategy (2009 – 2013) and the Scottish Housing Regulator – Homelessness Improvement Plan 2011 – 2013.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. N/A

6. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. A Furniture Scheme was approved by Committee on 24 August 2010 and ratified by the Finance & Resources Committee on 28 September 2010.

6.2. The report to that Committee presented one option, which proposed the introduction of a furnishings service charge of £300 for a single person or couple, that would provide a bed, bedding and a cooker; and £700 for a family, that would provide a cooker, fridge, beds and bedding, and be repayable over a five year period. This was agreed.

6.3. The Scheme has not yet been established and was passed to the Homelessness Service to develop.

6.4. Initial funding for the Furniture Scheme will come from the Homelessness Service budget.

6.5. The Furniture Service is intended to help homeless households equip their secure tenancies with essential household items.

6.6. The underlying principle recognises that the provision of furniture/white goods will contribute to the sustainability of otherwise vulnerable tenancies, thus reducing the likelihood of recurring periods of homelessness.

6.7. The Service is therefore a preventative and sustainability measure. It should also be considered in conjunction with other options such as recycled furniture providers or Credit Union Services.

6.8. The Furniture Service will be available to statutory homeless applicants who have been allocated a permanent tenancy by Aberdeen City Council. Once the fund becomes self sustainable, it will be open to any tenant.

6.9. The fund for the provision of such goods is limited and priority will, therefore, go to those who have no other options for securing such items for their tenancy providing that funds are available.

6.10. It is now proposed that a wider range of goods are available and this reflects the difficulty in obtaining such goods through the DWP or charities.

6.11. The following goods would available through the Furniture Service: -

- Single Bed
- Double Bed
- Cooker
- Microwave
- Fridge
- Washing machine
- Carpets
- Sofa
- Armchair
- Curtains


- 6.12. Applicants for the Service may choose which items they prefer up to a maximum of £600 for individuals or £900 for families. See examples of packages.
- 6.13. A service charge will be applied to the applicant's rent account and on acceptance into the Service the tenant takes on responsibility for the general care of the goods supplied.
- 6.14. The service charge will apply for a period of five (5) years.
- 6.15. The applicable service charge will be explained to every eligible tenant prior to acceptance into the Furniture Service.
- 6.16. The service charge will be £1.50 per £100 of goods. For example – goods of £600 = service charge of £9.00 per week; goods of £900 = service charge of £13.50 per week.
- 6.17. Items for the Furniture Service will be procured through the Council's current furnishings framework agreement.

7. AUTHORISED SIGNATURE

Donald Urquhart, Head of Housing & Community Safety

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Paul Hannan, Homelessness Manager

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EXAMPLES OF PACKAGES

| Item | Cost | Weekly charge per item | Item | Cost | Weekly charge per item |
|------------------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Single bed & mattress | £ 52.00 | £ 0.78 | Single bed & mattress | £ 52.00 | £ 0.78 |
| | | | Double bed & mattress | £ 84.00 | £ 1.26 |
| | | | | | |
| Cooker | £ 130.00 | £ 1.95 | Cooker | £ 130.00 | £ 1.95 |
| | | | Microwave | | |
| Fridge | £ 95.00 | £ 1.43 | Fridge | £ 95.00 | £ 1.43 |
| Washing machine | | | Washing machine | | |
| | | | | | |
| 2 seater sofa | £ 210.00 | £ 3.15 | 2 seater sofa | £ 210.00 | £ 3.15 |
| Armchair | | | Armchair | £ 120.00 | £ 1.80 |
| | | | | | |
| Curtains - living room | | | Curtains - living room | £ 45.00 | £ 0.68 |
| Curtains - bedroom | | | Curtains - bedroom | | |
| | | | | | |
| Carpet (5m x 4m) | | | Carpet (5m x 4m) | £ 140.00 | £ 2.10 |
| | | £ 0.78 | | | £ 0.78 |
| Total | £ 487.00 | £ 7.31 | Total | £ 876.00 | £ 13.14 |
| | | | | | |
| Weekly charge | | £ 7.31 | Weekly charge | | £ 13.14 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|--------|--|
| Single bed & mattress | £ 52.00 | £ 0.78 | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Cooker | £ 130.00 | £ 1.95 | |
| Microwave | | | |
| Fridge | | | |
| Washing machine | | | |
| | | | |
| 2 seater sofa | £ 210.00 | £ 3.15 | |
| Armchair | | | |
| | | | |
| Curtains - living room | £ 45.00 | £ 0.68 | |
| Curtains - bedroom | | | |
| | | | |
| Carpet (5m x 4m) | £ 140.00 | £ 2.10 | |
| | | £ 0.78 | |
| Total | £ 577.00 | | |
| | | | |
| Weekly charge | | £ 8.66 | |