

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET**

Decision Made: 8 October 2014

**SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY**

**Issue for Decision**

To agree the motion from Council relating to the Bedroom Tax (Spare Room Subsidy).

**Decision Made**

1. As a review of the Housing Allocation Policy was undertaken less than six months ago, there is no need to carry out another review. The actions taken to assist residents in downsizing to smaller accommodation was noted;
2. The Council will continue to do all it can within the Council's legal powers to minimise the impact of spare room subsidy on families where there maybe short term absences and also people with disabilities where additional bedrooms may be required due to a person's disabilities;
3. The Leader of the Council will write to the Ministers of Housing and Work and Pensions setting out the facts and experiences in Maidstone arising from the spare room subsidy policy and send a copy to the LGA; and
4. The Leader will also provide feedback at the next full Council meeting in December under the 'Current Issues' agenda item.

**Reasons for Decision**

Council adopted the Housing Allocation Policy in April 2013. It moved away from a points based system to a banding system.

A review was carried out in May this year with tenants and stakeholders and the issue of people being prevented from downsizing was not raised during the review.

From the records 39 people have been able to downsize over the past year which does not support the evidence that people were being blocked from downsizing. There are a further 79 applicants on the register who are looking to downsize and are under retirement age so these are the people that would be effected by the spare room subsidy.

It should be borne in mind that there are 587 people who are effected by

the spare room subsidy. Information relating to the services that are available to tenants has been promoted through housing associations and Golding Homes recently hosted an event about mutual exchanges which was open to all tenants which is another option which people can use to downsize.

There is a general lack of suitable accommodation that people can downsize to.

### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

As a review of the Housing Allocation Policy was undertaken only six months ago, it would not seem advisable to carry out another review at this time.

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Policy and Communications by: <b>17<sup>th</sup> October 2014.</b>
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