

Appendix D

Discretionary Housing Payments Policy: summary of replies

Consultation was carried out using the online portal and by directly contacting partner organisations in the Voluntary and Community sector and social sector landlords.

The consultation period ran from 12 March to 23 April and during this time 7 replies were received. Also during this time the Task & Finish Group originally arranged via the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee was reconvened to report on the policy. The report of this group is in a separate appendix.

The consultation asked the following questions and received the following replies

Questions asked the respondent to rate their answer using a scale running from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

1 – Are you responding as someone who has made an application/someone who has helped someone else to apply/a community or voluntary organisation?

Three replies were received from Voluntary/Community Sector employees; two from Registered Social Landlords; One from a Shropshire Council employee and one unidentified.

2 - One of the purposes of this policy is to enable people to meet their shortfall in their rent whilst they look at alternative solutions. This may include them taking proactive steps to address issues in their life. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Five respondents strongly agreed and two agreed with this purpose.

3 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the stated policy objectives of contributing to the aims listed on page 5 of the draft policy?

Five respondents agreed and two strongly agreed with the policy objectives

4* - We current include certain disability benefits as income when we consider Discretionary Housing Payment award requests. To balance this, we will then consider disability-related expenditure that the person might have to meet from these benefits. To what extent do you agree with this approach?

*NOTE: at the time of the consultation this was the approach taken however the recent High Court ruling on the treatment of this income now means it is excluded from calculations

Although now negated by the court ruling, one respondent strongly agreed with the approach, four agreed and two strongly disagreed, with one quoting the court ruling as the reason.

5 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to look at all of a person's income and expenditure to arrive at their ability to pay any rent shortfall?

One respondent strongly agreed, five agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

6 - If you have any specific comments about these proposals please provide them here, including any other special circumstances that you think we should consider providing Discretionary Housing Payment for.

Three respondents passed additional comments in response: one suggested that in all cases where payments are made to tenants of social landlords, the landlord be informed; one applauded the challenge over applicants financial decisions and the necessity of some outgoings; the third commented that DHP's should not be used to meet rent in advance requests from Social Sector Landlords.

7 - Applications for Discretionary Housing Payments do not carry the right of appeal but there is a system for reconsidering decisions on pages 16 and 17 of the draft policy. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?

Five respondents agree with the system; one neither agreed nor disagreed; one strongly disagreed but did not give reasons.