Dear Sir/Madam,

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities (Councillor J.A. Jackson) is to consider the following reports and make a decision on Monday 30th June, 2014 at 6.00 p.m. in Interview Room D, Town Hall, Nuneaton.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN FRANKS
Managing Director

AGENDA
PART 1
PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE

A fire drill is not expected, so if the alarm sounds please evacuate the building quickly and calmly. Please use the stairs and do not use the lifts. Once out of the building, please gather outside the Yorkshire Bank on the opposite side of the road.

Exit by the door by which you entered the room or by the fire exits which are clearly indicated by the standard green fire exit signs.

If you need any assistance in evacuating the building, please make yourself known to a member of staff.
Please also make sure all your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent.

2. **PUBLIC CONSULTATION** - Members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items if notice has been received.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct.

   **Note:** Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary or a Deemed Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Member must withdraw from the room.

   Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but has received a dispensation from Standards Committee, that Member may vote and/or speak on the matter (as the case may be) and must disclose the existence of the dispensation and any restrictions placed on it at the time the interest is declared.

   Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest as defined in the Code of Conduct, the Member may address the meeting as a member of the public as set out in the Code.

   **Note:** Council Procedure Rules require Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation allows them to remain to vote and/or speak on the business giving rise to the interest.

   Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest, the Council’s Code of Conduct permits public speaking on the item, after which the Member is required by Council Procedure Rules to withdraw from the meeting.

4. **HOUSING DECORATION ALLOWANCE POLICY DOCUMENT** – Report of the Director – Housing and Communities attached. *(Page 3)*
Agenda item: Single Member Decision

Report Summary Sheet

Date: 30 June 2014
Subject: Housing Decoration Allowance Policy Document
Portfolio: Housing & Communities (Councillor J.A. Jackson)
From: Director – Housing & Communities (Dawn Dawson)

Summary: To seek approval of a new Housing Decoration Allowance Policy Document.

Recommendations: That the level of decoration allowances and the criteria for it are approved.

Reasons: To ensure greater transparency on how decoration allowance is set and awarded, as well as assisting in having a consistent approach across Property Service in Housing.

Options: 1. Accept the recommendation
2. Not accept the recommendation

Subject to call-in: No
Forward plan: No

Corporate priorities: Aim 1 Priority 1

Relevant statutes or policy: There is no statute or policy as it were with respect to decoration allowance and the level awarded. Best practice and gauging what other local authorities are providing is the basis upon which the decoration policy document is written.

Equal opportunity implications:
The aim of the document is to treat everyone the same, to have a consistent approach for awarding decoration allowances in a transplant and open manner.

Human resources implications: None

Financial implications: An additional £50,000 per annum revenue burden upon the HRA, equating to around £1.4 million over the life of the 30 year business plan. Financial modelling has been undertaken by the Financial Planning Manager, who has confirmed that this level of spend would be affordable over the life of the business plan.

Health Inequalities Implications: None

Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Implications: None

Risk management implications: None

Environmental implications: Will benefit the tenant in have a more realistic allowance to improve their home environment and their quality of life therein.
Legal implications: None

Contact details: Dawn Dawson– Director of Housing & Communities
Tel. No: 02476 37 6408
dawn.dawson@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk
1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present and seek approval of a new Housing Decoration Allowance Policy Document.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the level of decoration allowances and the criteria for it are approved.

3. Background

3.1 At the request of the Scrutiny Panel, a report detailing the implication of increasing the levels of decoration allowance was presented on 19\textsuperscript{th} March 2013.

3.2 The recommendation of the Panel was that a review of the decoration allowance be undertaken. For the year 2012/13, the cost for voids and electrical rewiring were £27,250.

3.3 A review of the level of decoration allowance was undertaken, which detailed a comparison of neighbouring Local Authority allowances, in conjunction with an assessment on the future viability of the Housing Revenue account (HRA), given that any increase in decoration allowance would increase the revenue expenditure to the HRA.

3.4 At the request of the Scrutiny Panel, a follow up report detailing the review outcomes was present on 27\textsuperscript{th} February 2014. This report is attached as Appendix A.

3.5 As detailed in item 4.6 in Appendix A the proposal to increase the maximum decoration allowances for both void properties and re-wires were made.
4. **Policy Document**

4.1 **Level of Housing Decoration Allowance and Criteria (Appendix B)**

5.0 **Conclusion**

5.1 Housing regularly produces reviews and amends policy documentation where necessary and in this case it ensures greater transparency on how decoration allowance is set and awarded.

5.2 The provision of appropriate policies and procedure will assist in have a consistent approach with respect to the decoration allowance across Property Service in Housing.

Dawn Dawson
**Director of Housing and Communities**
Appendix A

AGENDA ITEM NO.

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Housing, Health & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 27th February 2014
From: Dawn Dawson, Director - Housing and Communities

Subject: Decoration Allowance

Portfolio: Housing (Cllr J.A. Jackson)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present information relating to the review of Decoration Allowances for the Council’s own housing stock.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the information is noted and any recommendations or comments be made to the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

3. Background

3.1 At the request of the Panel, a report detailing the implications of increasing the levels of decoration allowance issued was presented on 19th March 2013. This report is attached as Appendix A.

3.2 The recommendation of the Panel was that a review of decoration allowances be undertaken, especially given that the value of the decoration allowance has been unchanged since their introduction. For the year 2012/13, the costs for voids and electrical re-wiring were £27,250.

3.3 A review of the level of decoration allowance was undertaken in line with 4.2 of Appendix A, which detailed a comparison of neighbouring Local Authority Allowances, in conjunction with an assessment on the future viability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), given that any increase in decoration allowances would increase the revenue expenditure to the HRA.
4 Review Outcomes

4.1 As identified in the report of 19th March 2013, there is no prescribed formula detailing whether a decoration allowance should be offered or the level of that allowance. As such, social housing landlords have adopted policies and procedures that reflect local needs and aspirations that take account of the affordability of such schemes.

4.2 For Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, the following policy has been in place for at least the last xx years;

- The property may be a three bedroom dwelling and decorated to a satisfactory standard except for one room. In this case a £25 voucher would be offered.
- The property is classed as a difficult to-let, but is reasonably decorated. The maximum £75 voucher may be offered, as an incentive, in order to let the property quickly.

4.3 As detailed in Appendix A, tenants are responsible for the internal decoration of their home, as per their tenancy agreement. As such, decoration allowances for both void properties and re-wires are issued on a discretionary basis. In whatever circumstance, the allowance is only intended as a contribution towards decoration costs rather than an allowance to cover the full decoration cost.

4.4 There is currently very little indication from prospective tenants that an increase in decoration allowance would make a property more desirable for allocation. With regards to the decoration allowance payable following a full electrical re-wire, a higher number of existing tenants have raised concerns relating to the level of allowance, following disturbance to their existing decoration.

4.5 It is therefore proposed to increase the maximum decoration allowances for both void properties and re-wires as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Size</th>
<th>Max. Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Bedroom</td>
<td>£100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Bedroom</td>
<td>£130.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Bedroom</td>
<td>£160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Bedroom</td>
<td>£190.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Bedroom</td>
<td>£220.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 HRA is required to produce a 30 year business plan that accounts for the level of investment required in its housing stock and services and ascertains the financial sustainability based on those investment requirements. The proposed increase will place an additional £50,000 per annum revenue burden upon the HRA, equating to around £1.4 millions over the life of the 30
year business plan. Financial modelling has been undertaken by the Financial Planning Manager, who has confirmed that this level of spend would be affordable over the life of the business plan.

4.8 It is further proposed that subject to any recommendation by the Panel and any subsequent instruction from the Portfolio Holder, a formal policy will be established to set improved guidance for the award of a decoration allowance. In this way, the allocation of the allowance will be more transparent and tenants will be better informed in terms of the level of allowance they may expect to be awarded. Any future policy would be brought before the Panel.

DAWN DAWSO
Decoration Allowance Policy

Issued by Housing
NUNEATON & BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Quality Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This document is available in larger print.

Please contact Housing for a larger copy.
PAY POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The following guidance sets out what is the aim of the award, when it is given, how much can be given either in part or in full and what are the conditions of the award.

1.2 Its purpose is to give transparency on the allocation and the level of decoration allowance our tenants may expect to be awarded.

1.3 Once approved by a single member decision, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review as and when it is necessary.

2. The Aim of the award

2.1 Within the tenancy agreement it states that tenants are responsible for the internal decoration of their homes. Therefore in what ever circumstance the decoration allowance is awarded, the allowance is only intended as a contribution towards decoration costs rather than an allowance to cover the full decoration cost. On this basis, the decoration allowance is used on a discretionary basis only.

3. When is Decoration Allowance Awarded?

3.1 Decoration allowance will be awarded to the levels set out in Table 1 below when the tenant’s home is either fully rewired\(^1\) resulting in substantial disturbance to the existing decoration or when a new tenant rents one of the council’s void properties where the decoration is in very poor condition throughout.

3.2 Where the condition of the decoration within a void property is variable and or a partial re-wire is carried out to a property, which only disturbs a certain room/s then Table 2 will be used to decided upon the level of allowance award in that circumstance.

3.3 In the case of the award for decorating a void property, in part or in full, a letter authorising the level of the award will be given to the tenant at the point of sign up. The tenant would present the letter and one form of identification at the reception at one of the following addresses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Hall</th>
<th>Or</th>
<th>Bedworth Area Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coton Road</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuneaton</td>
<td>Bedworth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Only rewires that are being chased into plaster work will be eligible for a decoration allowance award.
Voucher/s would then be given and signed for by the tenant for audit purposes.

3.4 In the same way, decoration allowance awards for electrical re-wiring, in part or in full would follow a similar process. The difference will be after Property Services have received notification from their contractor that the works have been fully completed, the tenant will receive an authorisation letter in the post.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Size</th>
<th>Max Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flatlet/Bedsit</td>
<td>£80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Bedroom</td>
<td>£100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Bedroom</td>
<td>£130.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Bedroom</td>
<td>£160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four bedroom</td>
<td>£190.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Bedroom</td>
<td>£220.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flatlet/Bedsit</th>
<th>One Bedroom</th>
<th>Two Bedroom</th>
<th>Three Bedroom</th>
<th>Four Bedroom</th>
<th>Five Bedroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hall/Stairs/Landing</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Room</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 1</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretionary/ Dining Room</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
<td>£30.00</td>
<td>£40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£80.00</td>
<td>£100.00</td>
<td>£130.00</td>
<td>£160.00</td>
<td>£190.00</td>
<td>£220.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.0 The Award Conditions

4.1 The award itself comes as a voucher that cannot be exchanged for money. It can only be used to buy materials for decoration using the following supplier:

Wallpaper Warehouse address is:

8-10 Abbey Green
Nuneaton
CV11 5DR
Phone: 024 7638 4488

There is also a branch in
Coventry:
183 Alleliesly Old Road
Chapelfields
Coventry
CV5 8F1

4.2 Each voucher must be used within a six month period from the date of issue otherwise it will become invalid and will not be accepted by the above supplier.

We can translate this document into your preferred language if you need us to. Please phone (024) 7637 6376 and let us know which language you require.

DAWN DAWSON

Individual Cabinet Member Decision - Housing and Communities - 30.06.14