

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:	2149
Author:	Ian Roper
Department:	Resources
Contact:	Ian Roper (Job Title: Revenues & Benefits Business Support Manager, Email: ian.roper@nottinghamcity.gov.uk , Phone: 01158763856)
Subject:	Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) allocation
Total Value:	Up to £400,000 (Type: Revenue)
Decision Being Taken:	Approve the allocation of up to £400,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to bolster the annual Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) allocation
Reasons for the Decision(s)	Discretionary Housing Payment is an element of Housing Benefit (HB) administration that enables Local Authorities to provide short-term financial support to households who are unable to meet their rental liability, due to their financial circumstances, even taking into account the HB award. Central Government provide all local authorities with a DHP allocation and allow them to "top-up" the allocation if required, from their own funds. For 2015/16 the government allocation is £863,993, a reduction of £101,007 on the 2014/15 allocation. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have provided a directive for local authorities to utilise the HRA fund to top-up the DHP pot for local authority property DHP applications. Current estimates put the total DHP expenditure for 2015/16 at £1.27m
Other Options Considered:	Do nothing: This was considered. However, it would mean that the DHP pot would be exhausted. No new claims for DHP could be paid after September 2015. It would also mean that those Local Authority tenants currently in receipt of a DHP due to the Social Sector Size Criteria (aka Bedroom Tax) would have to make up any shortfall post September 2015.
Background Papers:	None

Published Works: **None**

Affected Wards: **Citywide**

Colleague / Councillor Interests:

Consultations:
Date: 25/06/2015
Other:Glen O'Connell. Corporate Director for Resources
Approved for progression to Delegated Decision

Date: 25/06/2015
Chief Finance Officer:Geoff Walker. Director of Strategic Finance
Approved for progression to Delegated Decision

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: **No Impact**

Equality: **EIA not required. Reasons: EIA not required, the DHP scheme is administered in line with DWP Best Practice and local policy. The decisions will be applied in line with this guidance and based on individual the circumstances of each application.**

Decision Type: **Portfolio Holder**

Subject to Call In: **Yes**

Call In Expiry date: **04/09/2015**

Advice Sought: **Legal, Finance**

Legal Advice: **There are no significant legal implications arising from the contents of this report. As identified in the report, the DCLG has issued a direction(under powers conferred by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) which permits the City Council to use the Housing Revenue Account for payments to the Council's own tenants under the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme for the financial year beginning 1 April 2015, subject to the conditions set out in the direction. Advice provided by Sarah Molyneux (Legal Services Manager) on 22/07/2015.**

Finance Advice:

There continues to be greater demand for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) than the allocation from central government. In 2014-15 a contribution of £0.120m was made by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the DHP fund. This decision proposes that in 2015-16 an additional amount of up to £400k is funded from the HRA.

The contribution from the HRA is subject to the conditions within the "Item 9 Credit and Item 10 Debit Direction 2015" issued by the DCLG. The amount requested is within the limits set by the Direction.

The impact on the HRA is to reduce the rental income available for the operation of and investment in the council's housing stock. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill currently progressing through Parliament includes a reduction in social housing rents of 1% per annum for 4 years, so this contribution to the DHP may not be affordable in future years, requiring a review of eligibility criteria for the award of DHP. Advice provided by Julie Dorrington (Finance Analyst (Housing)) on 30/07/2015.

Advice documents: [Item 9 credit and item 10 debit 2015 \(DHP\).pdf](#)

Signatures

Jane Urquhart (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing)
SIGNED and Dated: 27/08/2015
David Bishop (Deputy CE, CD for Development and Growth)
SIGNED and Dated: 14/08/2015