

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 JULY 2018**

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**Title:**

**RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE  
WAVERLEY SCRUTINY GROUP'S REPORT ON RECHARGES**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carole King]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

The Waverley Scrutiny Group completed a review on how the council manages the process of recharging certain costs to tenants and leaseholders. The report was presented to the Head of Housing Operations in February 2018 and shared with the Committee in March 2018.

This report informs the Housing O & S Committee how the Housing Service team has and will address the recommendations raised in the Waverley Scrutiny Group's report on recharges.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The report supports the Value for Money corporate priorities.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

Having a clear policy on re-charges, and unambiguous procedures, ensures that tenants and leaseholders are treated fairly and consistently.

**Financial Implications:**

Implementation of the recommendations raised by the Waverley Scrutiny Group will ensure an improvement on the recouping of costs and also a more controlled, transparent and accurate interpretation of the information.

**Legal Implications:**

The process and legal basis for recharging tenants is set out in Waverley's tenancy agreement. Waverley will not make any charges if the court or the law says that it cannot do so. Tenants' responsibilities for repairs are set out under Section 8 (Repairs and Maintenance) of the tenancy agreement.

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**1. Background**

1.1 The report from the Waverley Scrutiny Group was presented to the Head of Housing Operations and Recharge Collections Officer in February 2018. The comprehensive report covered the following:

- whether the recharge policy and process is fit for purpose and fair to tenants and leaseholders

- how the appropriate teams within the Housing Service are operating the new process
- what systems are being used to monitor and regulate collection of recharges
- what communication there has been to contractors and tenants in respect of recharge
- how cost effective the new process will be and whether it provides value for money
- what is being done to assist tenants in avoiding recharges, and
- recommendations to improve the process.

1.2 A first draft action plan was presented to the committee in March 2018. It was recommended for the action plan to be amended and submitted to the next committee in July 2018

## **2. Report recommendations and response**

2.1 On further review by officers and dialogue with the Scrutiny Group all 14 of the identified recommendations were accepted.

2.2 Work has commenced on all actions and eight have been completed. Please see Annexe One for all recommendations, comment and progress.

2.3 Completed recommendations include:

- the review of the Recharge Policy to reflect officer decision making and responsibilities - please refer to Annexe Two
- new accountancy system codes have also been created to easily identify and report on recharges, and
- new tenants are encouraged to take up home insurance

2.4 Work is in progress for the remaining six recommendations all expected to be completed by September 2018.

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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- thanks the Waverley Scrutiny Group for their report;
- supports the implementation of the scrutiny recommendations and action plan, and
- receives a progress report in November 2018 on implementation of the recommendations and details of the number of recharges and income received during 2018/19.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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