

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2024

Report Title	VISITOR ROOM POLICY UPDATE (INDEPENDENT LIVING)			
Purpose of Report	To inform Committee of the updates within the policy.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: a) Approve the updated Visitor Room Policy; b) Adopts the menu-based charging system for booking the rooms; and c) Delegates authority to the Strategic Head of Housing, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee to make future updates and amendments to the policy.			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation has taken place with Tenant Voice Representatives, SDC Officers and Accountancy Manager			
Report Author	Lynne Mansell Service Delivery Manager (Independent Living) Tel: 01453 754173 Email: lynne.mansell@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	With no increase in rental of the rooms, the cost of upkeep will outweigh current costs.			
Appendices	Appendix A - Updated Visitor Room Policy (Independent Living) Appendix B - Equality Analysis Form			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 For many years, all Independent Living schemes (formerly Sheltered Housing) had guest rooms as part of the communal facilities for friends and families of tenants living at the scheme. The rooms were free of charge until the Visitor Room Policy was adopted by Housing Committee on 8 June 2021.
- 1.2 The Visitor Room Policy has given clarity for use to both user and officer with regard to occupancy, minimum age, booking procedure, provisions available through to laundering and cleaning the rooms.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Visitor Room policy provides set expectations for both staff and visitors to adhere to. The policy has been reviewed and updated with the following changes:
 - The available rooms have been increased from 11 schemes to 12 schemes with this facility, with the re-introduction of The Beeches following modernisation – as listed in the Policy.
 - Booking and payment must be made through the Customer Services team who will enter onto a shared calendar for staff use.

- Keys will be delivered by a member of staff on the day of booking before close of business. If bookings are at weekends the keys will be delivered earlier.
- Costs for bookings are based on facilities available rather than a blanket cost i.e. en-suite v remote w.c.
- Costs have risen from £20 per night and £10 thereafter to:
 - £25 for 1st night and £20 for each consecutive night for en-suite
 - £20 for 1st night and £15 for each consecutive night for non en-suite.

2.2 Although the usage of the Visitor room is relatively low, the policy states increased charges for use which will generate adequate income back into the service allowing for a fund for wear and tear, replacement of furniture, linen etc., ensuring the room is kept to a good, quality standard.

2.3 The existing rooms which have not been used as Visitor rooms have been offered for multi-use such as break-out rooms, quiet space, 1-2-1's and training.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 It is essential the existing policy is updated to reflect the current climate. It also establishes the accepted use of all facilities providing a consistent, open and transparent approach of use for all visitors. There are clear conditions which mitigates confusion.

3.2 The Visit room has the potential to become a valuable resource. With the slight rise in costs per night, income will be regenerated back into the scheme.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

The use of visitor rooms has already seen an increase in income against budget for 2023/24 to £1.7k at Q3. With the requested uplift in costs, it is anticipated that the income will increase further going forward, allowing more funds to be reinvested in maintaining the quality of visitor rooms via wear and tear & replacements.

This increase in revenue and expenditure will be reflected in the next round of budget setting.

Jon Coldridge, Principal Accountant

Tel: 01453 754030 Email: jon.coldridge@stroud.gov.uk

4.2 Legal Implications

In terms of a policy document the report does not give rise to any material legal concerns. It is assumed that the booking system will contain terms and conditions which reflect the Conditions of Use set out in paragraph 4. The report addresses the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010

Alan Carr Lawyer, One Legal

Tel: 01684 272095 Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

4.3 **Equality Implications**

An EIA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

4.4 **Environmental Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.