

COUNCIL – 25TH FEBRUARY 2013

11. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

11.1 THE BEDROOM TAX

The following Motion on Notice was submitted by Councillor Sharp in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15:

That this Council resolves to support the amendment of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in order to repeal changes to Housing Benefit, commonly known as 'Bedroom Tax', and to write to the Secretary of State asking him to rethink his plans which would adversely affect 660,000 tenants nationally including 1,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable in Charnwood.

Reasons to support the motion:

1. The Bedroom Tax will place an intolerable financial burden on 1,000 households in Charnwood, many of whom include working or disabled occupants and/or children living in poverty, for a housing choice that was not theirs as most were placed in housing by this Council.
2. The Government's rationale is for tenants who are under-occupying to downsize to alternate properties. However, there is not sufficient housing in Charnwood to facilitate this and we would, therefore, be forcing tenants to accept additional rent charges.
3. The provisions of the 'Bedroom Tax' are inconsistent and fail to consider the additional needs of many households with regards to disabilities; adaption's made to homes, foster carers, and parents of serving military or who share custody of their children.
4. The size criteria in the social rented sector will restrict housing benefit to allow one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household with the following exceptions:
 - a. Children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share
 - b. Children under 10 regardless of gender are expected to share
 - c. Disabled tenant or partner who needs non resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra bedroom.

This would mean a family with two teenage girls under the age of 16 would be considered to be over occupying a three-bedroom house; and a family of a boy and girl aged 9 would be under occupying, could downsize to another property and in 12 months' time would be over occupying.

11.2 GRIT BINS/GRITTING

The following Motion on Notice was submitted by Councillor M. Smith in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15:

Many Councillors would have received complaints or stories about the problems experienced in the Borough during the recent snowfall. Aside from the loud criticism of the lack of gritting on pavements, slips and trips were a plenty, particularly in a range of landlord serviced sites owned by the Council and numerous partially owned landlord serviced sites. And many elderly residents found themselves housebound, so fearful were they of conditions outside.

This Council supports the provision of a 'Snow Warden' scheme that allows local communities to provide their own support to residents, particularly the elderly and infirm, during times of icy and dangerous conditions on pavements and car parks so allowing safer access to shops and facilities during difficult weather conditions.

It is recommended, therefore, that this Council appoints a dedicated 'Snow Warden' officer for the next 12 months tasked with liaising with Parish Councils, resident groups and the hard to reach communities to ensure a major roll out of the scheme across the Borough and a sizeable and effective network of Snow Wardens established.