

MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL to be held on Monday, 27th May 2024.

**Notice of Motion submitted by the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale -
Councillors K. Sheahan (Proposer), B. Collins, S. Keary, E. O'Brien, J.
O'Donoghue, A.Teskey**

We will move at the next Meeting if a recipient of carers allowance is living with elderly parents who are in receipt of the old age pension, their carers allowance adds to the rent of the social house they are living in. We believe that this should be addressed by the Elected Members and the extra charge on the rent account that is now incurred should be removed as we consider this to be unfair and unjust.

REPLY:

Rental income from its housing stock (circa 5600 units) is a very important revenue stream for the Council and is projected to amount to in excess of €19m in 2024. Any downward adjustment to the income criteria would have an inevitable impact on the level of services that the Council can provide. In order to quantify the financial impact of same the Housing Directorate would need to analyse the rent accounts of 8961 households in some detail – to include RAS and HAP tenancies, the rents of which are also calculated with reference to the Differential Rents Scheme. This would represent a massive body of work, which would take some time to complete.

Carer's Allowance was introduced by the Government many years ago to compensate people who are caring for a person in need of full-time care because of age, disability or illness. Those deemed eligible for same do not then have to rely on other forms of social welfare support, such as Jobseeker's Allowance etc., which are defined as income in calculating rent liability. The Differential Rent Scheme calculates the total household income and Carer's Allowance is no different to other incomes such as the following non-exhaustive list:-

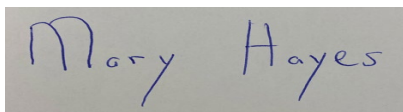
- Income from employment
- Maintenance Payments
- Job Seekers Benefit/Allowance

- Illness Benefit
- Deserted Wives Benefit
- Invalidity Pension
- Disablement Benefit
- Widows Pension
- Injury Benefit

Income from the Allowance has been reckonable for rent assessment purposes for many years, both by Limerick County Council and Limerick City Council prior to amalgamation, and the joint new authority subsequently. The adoption of a Differential Rent Scheme is an executive function and the last significant review took place in February 2020, with the aim of introducing a standard calculation method across the board for both city and county tenants.

There have been indications for some time that the Minister was considering the introduction of a standardised National Differential Rents Scheme to be applied across all local authorities. This aim was included in the 2020 Programme for Government and in the housing action plan, Housing for All. It appears that moves are now being made to act on this and, by Circular Letter 17/2024 dated the 23rd May 2024 issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Minister has indicated that it is aimed to scope and develop proposals for a national, standardised scheme in Q4 2024 and, to assist in this, has instructed all local authorities to provide up to date data in relation to rents payable by their tenants.

In the light of the foregoing, it is recommended that this motion be referred to the Housing SPC for further consideration along with any updates on a national Differential Rents Scheme.



Mary Hayes
Senior Executive Officer
Housing Support Services
24th May 2024

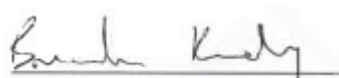
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Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will move at the next Meeting that the tenant handbook be amended to reflect that the tenant is not responsible for the boundary wall or fence of a Council property where there is no fault on the tenant.

REPLY:

The current tenant handbook was produced in late 2019. Limerick City and County Council will undertake a review of the tenants handbook in the lifetime of the next council through the housing SPC. In the meantime any boundary issues that are presented will be reviewed on a case by case basis.



Brendan Kidney
Senior Engineer
Housing Construction and Maintenance
22th May 2024