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Your Reference

Our Reference

PD/jb

Date

18 February 2003

Contact

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Dear Phil

POLICY CHANGE TO MOVE COUNCIL TENANTS TO MONTHLY COUNCIL TAX SYSTEM

Thank you for informing us last week of your Board's December meeting minute, that we note their decision not to support the Council's decision to change from weekly to monthly payment system for Council Tax from April 2003.

Following Don McLure's attendance at the Derby Homes December Board Meeting, we have taken steps to make sure all new tenants that you sign up, have a weekly Council Tax payments 'opt in form' in their tenancy pack. Don advised me that this was the Board's main concern. I confirm that we will always accept weekly payments from anyone who wishes to pay this way in the future.

We have carried out a lot of publicity promoting the change and the impact on tenants. A summary of what we have done to date on this was included in a report that went to the Council's Housing and Social Inclusion Briefing on 13 February 2003. Although you will have been issued with an agenda and reports for this meeting, a copy of this summary is attached for your records.

We also had an advert produced to include in your February edition of 'Housing News' which, unfortunately, was not supported for inclusion in the latest edition by the Editorial Committee. You may wish to discuss this issue with them.

All our staff have been trained to answer tenants' queries when the Council Tax bills go out and, in line with your advice, we will brief all of your cashiers through Elaine Ratcliffe and Caroline Hancock, during the next few days.

Should you require any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Paul Dransfield
Director of Finance

att

Payroll Services
ISO 9000/ 14001



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



2002-2003
Community Legal Services

Progress Report on publicity given to change in payment frequency for Derby Homes customers

Since 19 November when the report went to Cabinet, the following progress has been made in giving publicity to the changes;

- Revenues staff attended CHCG sub-agenda meeting on 3 December and discussed the changes with the members there. They made some very helpful and positive comments and suggestions which were taken on board when drawing up a notice circulated to all tenants.
- Notice giving details of the changes and inviting customers to register for weekly or Direct Debit payments was circulated with Derby TRAIN – week end of 7 December
 - to date we have received 768 replies
- Another notice has been prepared ready for inclusion in Housing News (due for publication in February)
- Posters advising customers of the change have been circulated to all area offices and are also on display in the Council House at Revenues reception and at cashiers
- So that new tenants or moving tenants don't miss out on being able to pay weekly the tenants pack has been updated with a form for Council Tax – they can give their details to us, claim discounts and exemptions, choose their method and frequency of payment all at once – they don't have to wait for us to send them a bill then query it later
- A brief notice has appeared in the Derby Express (page 3 9 January 2003)

STILL TO DO – attend some of the area meetings – pending dates and venues