



TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 October 2012

Subject Heading:

Revised Housing Allocations Scheme and New Tenancy Strategy covering the letting and management of housing in the London Borough of Havering

CMT Lead:

**Cynthia Griffin
Group Director – Culture and Community
01708 432260**

Report Author and contact details:

Richard Cursons
Committee Officer
Committee Administration
01708 432430

Policy context:

In accordance with paragraph 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by two Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Keith Darvill and Clarence Barrett) have called in the decision of the Cabinet Members dated 26 September 2012. The text of the requisition appears at the end of this report.

CABINET MEMBERS DECISION

Revised Housing Allocations Scheme and New Tenancy Strategy covering the letting and management of housing in the London Borough of Havering

Cabinet AGREED:

1. To approve the draft revised Allocations Scheme attached at Appendix A to the report as the Council's new Allocations Scheme to be implemented with effect from Monday 1 April 2013 and with local lettings policy from 1 October 2012 in accordance with section 7.3 of the Allocations Scheme.
2. The draft Tenancy Strategy attached at Appendix B to the report, with publication before 14 January 2013 and to be implemented with effect from Monday 1 April 2013.
3. To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Housing authority to make any minor amendments to the revised Allocations Scheme and/or Tenancy Strategy, necessitated by any future guidance, further legal advice, national

government or operational requirements, unless these would have a significant financial impact in which case a further report would be brought to Cabinet.

4. To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Housing authority to approve the necessary policies and procedures for reviewing the circumstances of individual households when their fixed term tenancy comes to an end.
5. To delegate to the Head of Housing and Public Protection authority to review the circumstances of every household on the Housing Register to enable a reassessment of their priority for housing prior to implementation of the new Allocations Scheme, and to take measures to protect those households on the Register who had bid for a property within the last three months prior to the implementation date and their bid had been in the top five by affording the Head of Housing and Public Protection the discretion to allow them to continue to bid for a period of three months after the date of the implementation of the new scheme.
6. That in advance of the full implementation of the revised Allocations Scheme on 1 April 2013, Cabinet approved from 1 October 2012 giving notification to households living outside of the borough, except serving and ex-service personnel and other exceptions as included under the revised Scheme of their removal from the Housing Register from 1 April 2013.
7. To delegate authority to the Lead Member for Housing to approve any local lettings policies under the new Allocations Scheme, in particular Dreywood Lodge, formerly known as Snowdon Court.

Reasons for decision:

Housing Allocations Scheme

The Localism Act 2011 gives housing authorities greater freedom and flexibility over which households are and are not eligible for social and affordable rented accommodation. The Council's current Allocations Scheme was approved in 2005 and it was now timely to review the existing scheme in light of the Localism Act and subsequent Code of Guidance and statutory instrument.

Tenancy Strategy

The Localism Act 2011 placed a new duty on housing authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy by 14 January 2013. Approval and adoption of the Strategy would set out clear guidance and support the Council and registered providers operating in the borough to make best use of social and affordable housing stock in the borough.

Options considered:

Housing Allocations Scheme

1. Not to change the existing Allocations Scheme – REJECTED because the Council would not be availing itself of the new freedoms introduced

under the Localism Act and people in the lowest priority bands would continue to have an unrealistic expectation of securing social or affordable rented housing.

2. Review and amend the Allocations Scheme – PROPOSED so as to remove the problems identified above.

Tenancy Strategy

No alternative was considered because the Council had a statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011 to publish a Tenancy Strategy.

REASONS FOR REQUISITION

1. To review the responses received through the various consultation processes;
2. To consider the delegation authorities contained in the recommendations within the Cabinet Report;
3. To consider the impact on tenants of the Guidance to housing associations on affordable rents;
4. To consider the impact on new tenants and their families of fixed term tenancy that comes to an end;
5. To review the criteria for "exceptional case reviews" to residential qualification requirements to remain on the housing list; and,
6. To review the Community Contribution Reward arrangements within the proposed Allocation Scheme

Councillor Keith Darvill
Councillor Clarence Barrett

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the requisition of the Cabinet Decision and determine whether to uphold it.