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Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

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| Subject Heading: | Minor Amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme to Incorporate the Keys to Change Training Programme |
| Cabinet Member: | Cllr Lesley Kelly, Lead Member for Housing |
| CMT Lead: | Joy Hollister, Group Director – Children, Adults and Housing |
| Report Author and contact details: | Jonathan Geall Housing Needs and Strategy Manager tel: 01708 434606 e-mail: jonathan.geall@havering.gov.uk |
| Policy context: | The Housing Allocation Scheme furthers the Council's commitment of providing high quality services to individuals and these amendment promote employment |
| Financial summary: | This decision itself has no specific financial implications; no additional costs will be incurred. By way of background, resources for the Keys to Change training support programme have already been secured from the European Social Fund, with match-funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) |
| Relevant OSC: | Towns and Communities |
| Is this decision exempt from being called-in? | No |

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improved housing options. Making access to the Housing Register contingent on getting a job at the end of the training when otherwise there would be no access is considered a strong incentive.

Provide a private rented property for those taking up a job following completion of the Keys to Change training, but not give access to council / housing association housing – REJECTED. The Homes and Housing Service already provides access to private rented homes regardless of working status and thus this is not seen as a meaningful incentive.

Maintain the 12 months of work qualification period for a Community Contribution Reward (rather than the proposed 6 months) – REJECTED. It is recognised that those taking up perhaps their first ever job, or returning to employment after a considerable break, may struggle to maintain the job and/or may take up employment with a short initial contract. For this reason, a target for individuals to be in employment six months after conclusion of the training has been included in the contract with the training support provider. It makes sense to align the Housing Allocation Scheme with this six month target. Furthermore, it is felt that maintaining the 12 month qualification period may seem like too distant a target for those with an inconsistent employment record whereas the aim of the Keys to Change programme is the incentivise employment at every step.

NOTE: it is recognised that someone could join the Housing Register on getting a job on completion of the training but then fail to sustain it in which case they could remain on the Register without any housing need other than the fact that at some point in the past they took part in a training programme. This would clearly not be an incentive to maintain employment, hence if, at six months after completing the Keys to Change programme, the person is no longer employed their qualification for council/housing association housing by virtue of completing Key to Change will cease and they will be removed from the Register if this is their only housing need reason.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The minor changes covered in this report support the aims of the Keys to Change programme which has been discussed with the Lead Member for Housing, Homes and Housing officers, Regeneration officers concerned with training, employment and community development, and London Councils who are overseeing ESF schemes across London.

The Department for Communities and Local Government's 'Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England' provides specific guidance on making alterations to an existing scheme. Essentially, only major changes in policy need be consulted on – see the Legal Implications and Risks section below – and as these amendments are of a minor nature, impacting on relatively few people, wider consultation has not taken place.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Jonathan Geall

Designation: Housing Needs and Strategy Manager

Signature: 

Date: 5-11-13

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Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council's existing scheme was implemented in April 2013 following considerable consultation and Counsel opinion.

There is some degree of flexibility about how to frame a Housing Allocation Scheme, with guidance provided in the Department for Communities and Local Government's 'Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England' published in June 2012. At paragraph 4.19 the guidance states that:

... an allocation scheme may provide for other factors than those set out in s.166A(3) [reasonable preference categories] to be taken into account in determining which applicants are to be given preference under a scheme, provided that:

- they do not dominate the scheme, and*
- overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not."*

Including 'completing the Keys to Change' as a housing need is lawful, provided those accessing housing through this route do not come to dominate over those with a reasonable preference.

Given the numbers this is likely to affect only around about 40 people, it does not appear that the proposed inclusion of completing the Keys to Change programme as a qualifying housing need will overshadow those with a reasonable preference and therefore there is a minimal risk of successful challenge..

The number of proposed beneficiaries of the Keys to Change programme is also pertinent to the consideration of whether consultation is required. The Guidance referred to above states at Paragraph 5.3:

Section 166A(13) requires authorities, before adopting an allocation scheme, or altering a scheme to reflect a major change of policy, to:

- send a copy of the draft scheme, or proposed alteration, to every Private Registered Provider with which they have nomination arrangements, and*
- ensure they have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.*

The changes recommended do not represent a major change of policy and therefore there is a minimal risk in making the changes without prior consultation.

Stephen Doye
Legal Manager

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme detailed in this report have no additional financial implications for either the HRA or general fund.

By way of background, provision has already been made in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in 2013/14 to provide 50% match funding totalling £125,000. £125,000 will also be secured from the European Social Fund.

Conway Mulcahy
Finance Business Partner

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**HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS
(AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)**

The training element of the Keys to Change programme will be provided by Lifeline Limited. There are no HR implications arising from the amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme covered in this report.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

An extremely thorough Equalities Assessment was carried out in support of the design and implementation of the new Housing Allocation Scheme in April 2013.

The Keys to Change programme has been specifically designed to assist some of the most disadvantaged people in Havering, notably, those who are:

- aged 18-34 (or aged 16-17 where the young person is not eligible for existing programmes, including ESF and Youth Contract provision)
- unemployed for 0-9 months
- not in Education Employment or Training (including other work programmes)
- have no or low skills level
- presenting some housing need(s)
- lone parents
- Looked after Child, or a Care Leaver.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Keys to Change briefing note – attached at Appendix 1.

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because—

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Leslie Kelly.

Cabinet Portfolio held: Housing

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title:

Other manager title:

Date: 5-11-13

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Andrew Beesley, Committee Administration Manager, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on 5/11/13

Signed



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Keys to Change Programme: Briefing Note

1. Project description

The project aims to support into sustained employment single people, including lone parents, aged 16 – 34 years, who have some housing need and who have been unemployed for 0-9 months (who are thus not eligible for existing work programmes). The guiding principle is to reinforce the 'work pays' message by providing enhanced housing options to those participating in the programme and particularly those gaining and sustaining employment.

The work-related support will be delivered by Lifeline Limited, a specialist organisation procured under London Councils arrangements and selected jointly by London Councils and Havering Council.

2. Funding

The project will run for two years from November 2013.

The total programme costs are **£250,000**, consisting of:

£125,000 HRA resources

£125,000 European Social Fund, channelled through London Councils
-5% payable to London Councils for project administration – this is non-negotiable, leaving

£237,500 project resources

3. Summary of targeted outcomes

A total of at least 100 participants will participate in the programme, of these:

- 100 will receive tailored Information Advice and Guidance
- at least 20 should gain Skills for Life Qualifications
- at least 20 should gain Vocational Qualifications
- at least 35 should undertake a work placement
- at least 50 should gain employment, of which, at least 40 should still be employed six months later

Payment is by results on a set schedule, with the figures above being the maximum numbers for which the provider will receive payment.