

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 June 2017

Review of the Housing Allocation Scheme

1. Contacts

Report Author:

Rob Dunmall, Housing Operations Manager,

Tel: 01243 785166 Ext 22334 E-mail: rdunmall@chichester.gov.uk

2. Recommendation

The committee is requested to:

2.1 Consider and comment on the proposed amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme set out in the options section of the appendix to this report.

2.2 Note that the proposed options will then go forward for consultation with the Council's Registered Provider of Social Housing partners.

3. Background

3.1. On 9 July 2013 the Cabinet approved a revised Allocation Scheme to take advantage of the freedoms provided by the Localism Act 2011 to allow local housing authorities to determine the classes of people that qualify to join the housing register.

3.2. The objective was to have an Allocation Scheme that better meets the needs of people with a local connection to the district and to ensure that all applicants on the housing register have an opportunity to be allocated a social home.

3.3. The adopted Scheme provides that only applicants with a valid local connection to the district qualify to join the housing register, subject to minor exceptions prescribed by regulations. It was recommended that the Scheme should be reviewed after it had been in operation for three years.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

4.1. The review, which forms the Appendix to this report was carried out to ensure that the Allocation Scheme still meets the initial objective of providing a scheme that meets the needs of local people and to identify any issues that have arisen as a consequence of the adoption of the Allocation Scheme.

4.2. The review has identified five issues that have arisen since the Allocation Scheme was adopted and makes recommendations for amendments. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider and endorse the recommendations so that they can form part of the consultation process with the Council's Registered Provider of Social Housing (RP) partners.

- 4.3. The proposed changes to the Allocation scheme should ensure that the Scheme continues to meet the statutory requirements and will also help to reduce void times.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the issues arising and the options for change set out in the Appendix and to endorse the recommended changes.
- 5.2. The options will then form the basis of a consultation exercise with the Council's RP partners. Following consultation Cabinet will be asked to adopt amendments to the Allocation Scheme.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1. The review forms the Appendix to this report and sets out the options considered and the reasons why the recommended options are the preferred options.
- 6.2. An alternative would be not to amend the scheme and continue with the existing Allocation Scheme, however, some identified issues have emerged which have resulted in these proposals.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1. The recommended options will have no resource implications since they can be implemented within existing staff resources. Some of the recommended changes may benefit the Council's RP partners by reducing void times and reducing staff resources needed to allocate properties.
- 7.2. The Sussex Homemove Partnership is currently procuring a new IT system that will allow all of the recommended options to be implemented.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. This report forms the first stage in the consultation process although initial discussions with Hyde Group have been undertaken to help identify the issues. Subject to the committee's endorsement full consultation will then be undertaken with the Council's RP partners and organisations such as Shelter and Citizen's Advice Bureau.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1. The only negative impact will be on applicants on the housing register who have been working in the district for a period of at least 12 months but less than two years. The impact can be mitigated by applying the amendment to new applicants and not seek to remove those applicants who were allowed onto the housing register prior to the implementation of the recommendation.
- 9.2. The equalities assessment undertaken in relation to the existing scheme will be reviewed following any amendments.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder:		No
Climate Change:		No
Human Rights and Equality Impact: The proposed amendments to the Allocation Scheme will be subject to a full equalities impact assessment.	Yes	
Safeguarding:		No

11. Appendix

11.1. The Review of Chichester District Council's Allocation Scheme.

12. Background Papers

12.1. Chichester District Council - Allocation Scheme 8 March 2016 available as a downloadable document at:

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/24494/Applying-for-the-housing-register>