

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 111

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Review of Choice Based Lettings		
Date of Meeting:	21st April 2010		
Report of:	Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Sylvia Peckham	Tel: 293318
	E-mail:	Sylvia.peckham@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the scope of the Review of Choice Based Lettings.
- 1.2 A major review of the current Housing Register Allocations Policy was undertaken and approved by cabinet on 20th January 2009. However, Tenants have expressed dissatisfaction at the Choice Based Letting system by which properties are allocated. It is agreed that the area of Choice Based Lettings and systems for allocating accommodation therefore be subject to a fundamental review.
- 1.3 Following consultation, a final report will be prepared for HMCC and Housing Cabinet setting out recommendations

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That Housing Cabinet notes the scope of the review and the timetable to achieve this.
- (2) A report will be brought back to Housing Cabinet in 6 months time to report the recommendations of the Review.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 At the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 8th February 2010 the Chairman announced the creation of a tenant led focus group to Review Choice Based Lettings
- 3.2 This report sets out the scope of the review. The first meeting of the focus group is planned for 15th April and at that meeting timescales for reporting and finalising the review will be agreed. A report detailing the outcome of the Review will be brought back to HMCC and Housing Cabinet in 6 months time.
- 3.3 The review will be led by a focus group which will comprise tenant representatives from BHCC. Two tenant representatives have been elected from each of the four Area panels and at the meetings on 14th April, a representative will also be elected from the High Rise Action Group, the Sheltered Housing Action Group and the Tenant Disability Network.
- 3.4 The focus group will work with the Head of Temporary Accommodation & Allocations to determine priority outcomes to be delivered by the Allocation policy for the city having regard to the priority and preferences set out in Housing Act 1996 Part 6 and having regard to the relevant Code of Guidance.
- 3.5 The group will also explore the platform for delivering the allocation of accommodation, which is currently Choice Based Lettings
- 3.6 The group will formulate recommendations which will be subject to wider Consultation with the City and subject to Equality Impact Assessment

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Not applicable at this time

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The review of Choice Based Lettings will be carried out from within existing resources and therefore there are no financial implications at this stage.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 16.03.10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 By virtue of section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 the Council is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. The scheme must include a statement as to the Council's policy on offering people who are to be allocated accommodation a choice of accommodation, or the opportunity to

express preferences about the accommodation to be allocated to them. Choice Based Lettings is the Council's allocation scheme for the purposes of section 167. In exercising its functions in relation to the allocation of housing accommodation, the Council is required to have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Guidance issued in August 2008 includes the following statement, " In the Secretary of State's view, all housing authorities should adopt an allocation scheme which offers a choice of accommodation and she has set a target for all housing authorities to have done so by 2010. " There is nothing to prevent the Council from reviewing its allocation scheme, but any proposals arising from the review must have proper regard to the legislative framework. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights will be adversely affected by the proposal to review Choice Based Lettings.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 11.03.10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Any policy or strategy development arising from the work reported above will be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. Housing is one of the 12 key objectives in the Council's Sustainability Strategy which aims 'to ensure that everyone has access to decent affordable housing that meets their needs'

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct implications arising from this report

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Any policy or strategy development work arising from the work of the Focus Group will be undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The work of this Focus Group reflects the priorities and aims of the 2020 Community Strategy and Council's strategic goals of improving housing in the City and ensuring that residents have a healthy living environment.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The alternative is not to review the Allocation policy or CBL. Tenants have expressed dissatisfaction with the current system. National Guidance emphasises Consultation with tenants and interested parties over Allocations policies. Therefore if we were to not review the Allocation policy and CBL we would continue to have dissatisfied tenants.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To note the scope of the Review

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None