

EE18. Housing Allocations Review Public Consultation

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which presented the outcome of a public consultation on proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy. The allocations policy required amendment to allow realisation of the objectives to move the rapid rehousing plans forward within the specified timescales.

At its meeting of 14 November 2019 the Executive agreed to consult on changes to the Housing Allocations Policy. The consultation was carried out for six weeks online. Paper versions of the online survey were also available to ensure that as many people could participate as possible. Additionally a programme of focus groups targeting specific areas and accessible road shows for members of the public were undertaken in each of the localities to discuss current and future issues and contacted people occupying temporary homeless accommodation.

315 consultation responses were completed. 1,769 individual comments were made to both individual questions and as general additional comments.

- 72% of respondents agreed that housing need should be prioritised over aspiration;
- 82% believed that the policy should be flexible to allow the Council to meet unforeseeable needs;
- 58% of respondents did not think that the current Allocations policy was equal and fair, and
- 34% did not believe the Policy was easy to understand, 31% did and 35% were neutral.

Decision

The Emergency Executive agreed:-

(1) the following changes to the Allocations Policy in light of the public consultation:-

- (i) Local Letting Initiative High Flats - reduce the age restriction to 50 years old;**
- (ii) Local Letting Initiative New Builds - all categories could apply in line with the quota systems;**
- (iii) Under Occupancy - align the application of Band 1 priority for under-occupation with overcrowding;**

In addition once an applicant had been allocated a house they could not apply for a move within 12 months unless there was a significant change of circumstance;

- (iv) Time limiting Priority (Band 1 Applicants) - to limit applicants with Band 1 and 2 priorities in Home Mover**

and Home Starter categories to 3 months of non-bidding and then reduce to a Band 4;

Furthermore that applicants on Band 3 or 4 would have their application cancelled after 12 months of no bidding activity;

- (v) Home Seeker Category Offers - reduce the number of offers to Home Seekers from two to one;**
 - (vi) Housing Debt and Allocations – continue with a three month payment plan for a suspension to be uplifted;**
 - (vii) Letting Quotas – increase the quota to Home Seekers from 33% to 45%, and**
- (2) that the Executive review the outcomes from the changes when the annual Local Housing Strategy report was presented to Members. This was expected to be in autumn 2021.**