

Item 4

Revised Template Scoping Document following Members comments 13 07 17 meeting

Community Select Committee	
Scrutiny Review Title:	Application of the Housing Allocations Policy (linked to Lettings)
Background issues to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members raised the issue of reviewing the application of the Council’s Allocations Policy when the committee agreed items for the work programme in March 2017. Members were keen to link any work on allocations with allocations into sheltered housing schemes and the flexi care schemes to see how these schemes were working in practise. It was also commented that regarding Lettings, Members could comment on the work of the newly appointed Reconnection Key Worker at the end of the six month pilot.
Is this issue covered by the Future Town Future Council Programme?	(i) Housing Development - Excellent Council Homes for Life - Increase the number of social & affordable homes in Stevenage & (ii) The provision of high quality, efficient and effective Housing services for our tenants and leaseholders (develop a better Housing Service to our older people)
Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via complaints or Members’ surgeries or with Officers?:	This issue is of interest to local people who are on the Housing register. This issue is raised by residents in Members’ Surgeries.
Focus of the review: (State what the review focus will be)	<p><i>Following the meeting on 13 July 2017 to consider and agree the content of the Scoping Document the following issues were agreed as the focus of the review by the Committee:</i></p> <p><u>Sheltered Criteria & Under-Occupiers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are allocations into sheltered housing schemes and the flexi care schemes working in practise? • Introduce priority categories for under-occupiers, with an options paper outlining the relevant choices for tenants

	<p>Aims:</p> <p>That the committee be satisfied that the allocations policy is being implemented effectively and serving the people on the waiting list according to the expectations of the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish whether the allocations policy is effective in housing residents according to the premise that members of each band/group are being given the opportunity of housing • Whether the letting process is dealing accordingly with housing needs? – evidence should be presented to the committee to show where the process is effective and where it is not. Should data need protecting this should be done leaving the case study details for analysis. Is it all priority need? In 2014/15 the Council promised the residents, if they remained on the list, that every section of the list should expect to be housed and anyone who wasn't going to be housed was taken off of the list. Members want to test if this has happened? • Whether the housing offered is fit for habitation/meets the needs of the resident (including sheltered housing) Members want to look at the suitability of people who are being housed in sheltered housing – is it appropriate? • For owner occupiers Members have asked for any available data on where owners have moved into council housing through the scheme which allows people to do so. • Identify any problems with allocations in order to inform changes needed to the policy • Through looking at the evidence Members will be able to see what needs to be reviewed so that we can strive to be open and realistic in meeting housing needs
<p>Timing issues: Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p>	<p>Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.</p>
<p>The Committee will meet on (provide dates if known):</p>	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue From June 2017 – Discuss scoping with lead officers for Housing Allocations review 13 July 2017 – agree draft scope & receive presentation from officers</p>

	<p>Interview witnesses - 26 September 2017 first date and further dates (likely to be quarter 2 and quarter 3, July 2017 – Dec 2017)</p> <p>Agree recommendations & final report - Date to be agreed</p>
<p>SBC Leads (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p>	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas</i> • <i>Strategic Director Community, Matt Partridge</i> • <i>Assistant Director Housing & Investment, Jaine Cresser</i> • <i>(Draw from other officers as necessary – including Lettings Advisor, Elayne Crisp. Other Housing officers – Service Manager Supported Housing, Janet Hagger, Housing Operations Manager, Peta Caine, Empty Homes Consultant, Walter Oglina, Housing & Homeless Manager, Theo Addae, and officers from Reconnections Key Worker, Sheltered Housing and Flexicare Scheme)</i>
<p>Any other witnesses (external persons/critical friend)?:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Critical Friend – Would it be appropriate for this review to invite an officer from another local authority or social housing provider to speak as a “critical friend”.</i> • <i>Members of the public who are on the waiting list (officers to advise suitability) and if possible recently housed tenants</i>
<p>Allocation of lead Members on specific individual issues/questions:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting.</p> <p>Members will ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews):</p>

Any other Questions Members wish to cover:	<u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? – The effect of damp and mould on E&D characteristic groups compared with other community groups?
<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	It is not considered that this review would lend itself to a site visit.
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised	<i>To be identified by the lead Member – Cllr</i>
<u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):	<p><i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting 13 July 2017 (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)</i></p> <p>Any other matters that are not directly linked to the review into allocations should be directed to officers.</p> <p>The following issue was identified by the Executive Portfolio Holder and officers as a potential issue that could be considered in a review and will be picked up by officers in their wider review of the allocations policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the local connection rules - People on the allocations list who currently lose 'local residency' points if they take a Private Rented Sector accommodation let outside of the Borough. Could look at introducing a change like a 'five in seven year rule', so residents who had lived for between 5 out of 7 years would still keep their points if they came back to the area in the allotted time period
<u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review	<p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 13 July 2017:</i></p> <p>Evidence requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of housing allocations for 2016 – 17 groups/bands/property/ waiting times – Evidence to show how the allocations policy has worked, e.g. the number from each stage of the people on the waiting list who have been housed? – Is it all priority need? • For owner occupiers Members have asked for any available data on where owners have

	<p>moved into council housing through the scheme, which allows people to do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 to 3 complaints relating to allocations & lettings
<p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p>