

**Bolsover District Council**

**Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee**

**21<sup>st</sup> September 2015**

**Call In of Minute 0193 – Choice Based Lettings – 2015 Review**

**Report of the Governance Manager**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

- To consider a call in relating to changes to the Council's Choice Based Lettings (CBL) System

**1 Report Details**

Executive considered a report at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015 in relation to changes to the Council's Choice Based Lettings (CBL) System. Executive resolved, in line with officer recommendation, that:

- (1) The Council withdraw from the sub-regional choice based letting system. The time-frame for this to be determined by the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Head of Housing following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
- (2) A number of minor changes to the Allocations Scheme be made to have the following impacts:
  - a. The quota system for properties be replaced by a simplified set of rules.
  - b. High level medical points be only offered to residents of the District.
  - c. Applicants who have been re-housed by the Council not be considered for alternative accommodation for a period of at least three years.
  - d. An applicant who has given up a tenancy be excluded from the waiting list for a period of at least three years.
  - e. Households may be suspended from the waiting list if any member of the household has a housing related debt.
  - f. People may be excluded from the waiting list if the Council consider their behaviour makes them unsuitable to hold a tenancy.

- g. People from outside the District be treated as if they reside in the District if they have a job within the district that has lasted for more than 12 months and was for more than 12 hours per week.
- h. New financial check will be introduced for applicants who may be unable to afford their accommodation.
- i. People only to be able to appear as part of one application.

(3) The Housing Application form be simplified. Additional questions be used including questions about a connection to the armed forces.

(4) Members note that the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Head of Housing has used delegated powers to stop using some types of bidding as they did not offer value for money.

(5) The Assistant Director of Community Safety and Head of Housing be given delegated authority, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to introduce an alternative CBL system if this provided better value than the existing system.

(6) Members ask the Housing Working Group to consider the following questions, and report back to a future meeting of Executive.

- a. Should applicants be asked about their level of income?, and
- b. What level of income should exclude people from the waiting list?
- c. Should applicants be asked about their level of savings and equity in their current home? And
- d. What level of savings or equity should exclude people from the waiting list?
- e. Should applicants be asked if they own any other property (in any part of the world), and
- f. Should this exclude people from the waiting list

1.1 The decision was published on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and Members were informed that they had until the end of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to call the decision in. The decision was called in on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015 by Councillors M.G. Crane and R. Turner.

1.2 The reason given for the call in was: To allow scrutiny of alterations to the Allocations Policy.

1.3 In line with the Council's Constitution, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT has been asked to attend the call in together with the Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing.

1.4 The process for considering the call in is for the Chair and Committee to decide however a proposed process is set out below:

- (a) The two signatories to the call in are asked to set out their reasons for calling in the item and may be asked questions by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT and the Committee.
- (b) The Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT, supported by the Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing, will respond to the call in and may be asked questions by the call in signatories and the Committee.
- (c) The Committee will then deliberate and decide what to do. The options available are set out in section 6 of this report. The call in signatories, Portfolio Holder and officers may remain in the room while this happens.

1.5 If the Committee decides to take no further action and endorses the decision by the Executive then the decision may be implemented immediately after this meeting.

1.6 If the Committee decides to refer the matter back to the Executive then it will be reconsidered at the meeting of the Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Having reconsidered the original decision, Executive may decide to affirm their original decision or to take a different decision.

1.7 The Committee may refer the matter to Council at this juncture but only if it is deemed to be outside the Policy or Budget Framework.

## **2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation**

2.1 To enable the Committee to consider a call in requested by two Scrutiny members.

## **3 Consultation and Equality Impact**

3.1 As set out in the report.

## **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 This report sets out the options and it is for the Committee to decide, by a positive resolution, which option to choose.

## **5 Implications (financial, legal, HR)**

As set out in the report.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 There is no officer recommendation in respect of this report. Instead, the Committee has three options:

- (a) To take no further action and endorse the decision taken by the Executive. The decision may be implemented immediately after this meeting.
- (b) To refer the matter back to the Executive for reconsideration. The Committee should state its concerns and reasons for referring back. The decision may not be implemented until the matter has been considered.

- (c) To refer the matter to Council. This would only be where the Committee felt the decision was outside the Council's Budget Policy and Framework.

## 7 Decision Information

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	
<b>District Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b>	Providing Our Customers With Excellent Service

## 8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Call In Notice
B	Minute extract from Executive, 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
C	Report from Executive, 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
D	Call in Procedures
<b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
None.	
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Report Reference –