

Bolsover District Council

Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee

21st October 2015

Call In of Minute 0821 – New Bolsover, Local Lettings Policy

Report of the Governance Manager

Purpose of the Report

- To consider a call in relating to a proposed Local Lettings Policy for Council Houses in New Bolsover

1 Report Details

Executive considered a report at its meeting on 29th February 2016 in relation to a Local Lettings Policy for New Bolsover. Executive resolved, in line with officer recommendation, that:

- (1) A local lettings policy be adopted for existing tenants of New Bolsover on the following basis.
 - (a) Any tenant applicant from New Bolsover can be direct matched with any improved property on New Bolsover for a property of the appropriate size. This means that such properties will not be advertised.
 - (b) Any tenant applicant who wishes to move to another area must apply through the Council waiting list. In considering such applications appropriate weight will be given to their needs in the light of the requirement to undertake extensive refurbishment to their existing home.
 - (c) Any tenant applicant who wishes to be re-housed in a sheltered housing scheme, or has a need for a property with adaptations will be directly matched with a property to suit their needs.
- (2) If the Council have begun possession proceedings against a tenant (defined as the tenant has a current Notice of Seeking Possession, or a Court order for any breach of tenancy) any decision will be considered by the Housing Allocations Review Panel (HARP) Panel

before any offer of accommodation is made. The HARP panel decision would be based on a balance of the status of the tenancy, the amount of rent arrears, the payment history of the tenant and the age of the debt, as well as the personal situation of the tenant. The Panel would be able to approve a move, refuse a move or make a move conditional.

- (3) From April 2016 for a period of two years the Council provide assistance for tenant applicants who move within New Bolsover or to an alternative Council property as a result of this scheme. This would include removal costs, lifting and refitting carpets and disconnection and connection of cookers and washing machines.
- (4) Resolutions (1) and (3) only apply to tenants of the Council who were living in unimproved Council owned properties on New Bolsover. These changes would not apply to situations where the Council would not obtain vacant possession of the property following a move.
- (5) The scheme starts from 1 April 2016 and runs until 31 March 2019 and may be extended by the Assistant Director – Head of Housing and Community Safety, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT.

1.1 The decision was published on 4th March 2016 and Members were informed that they had until the end of 11th March 2016 to call the decision in. The decision was called in on 9th March 2016 by Councillors M.G. Crane and J. Wilson.

1.2 The reason given for the call in was:

We wish to be informed what is meant by 'appropriate weight' in Recommendation 1(b), as we feel they should be treated no differently to anyone currently on the waiting list.

We would also like to stress that we have no objection to any property being used as a decant property for a maximum of 3 years for the scheme to go ahead.

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 (BDC).

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 Corporate Plan, HR & Leisure and the Committee.

- (b) The Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT, supported by the Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing (BDC), 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 13th June 2016. 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

Is the decision a Key Decision? (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)	
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Providing Our Customers With Excellent Service

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Call In Notice
B	Minute extract from Executive, 29 th February 2016
C	Report from Executive, 29 th February 2016
D	Call in Procedures
Background Papers (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.	
Covering Report Author	Contact Number
Matthew Kane, Governance Manager	01246 242505

Report Reference –