

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 9 October 2012

BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Review of the Housing Allocations Policy

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval of the approach to review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy as per the commitment in the recently approved Council Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the approach to review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The new Housing Allocations Policy was introduced in July 2007 and has been in operation for five years and is due to be reviewed.
- 3.2 The development of local authorities and registered social landlords' allocation policies is broadly set out in Government legislation and underpinned by good practice guidance.
- 3.3 A number of key issues associated with the allocations policy have developed since it was introduced in 2007 and will influence the review and development of a new policy. Of particular note is the Scottish Government's homeless legislation to remove priority need by the end of 2012, placing additional obligations on local authorities to provide settled accommodation for all unintentionally homeless households. Recent allocations good practice guidance (2011) and the forthcoming Scottish Housing Regulator report will also inform the review process.

- 3.4 A Project Initiation Document (PID) will guide the policy review process. A project team will be formed that will include council officers from Housing, Homelessness, Legal, Adult and Children's Wellbeing along with members of the East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel.
- 3.5 The project team will report to a Programme Board who will oversee the process and consider the recommendations of the project team subject to final approval by East Lothian Council. The Programme Board will also consider other significant projects such as the development of the Council's Social Housing Charter.
- 3.6 The Programme Board will consist of the Executive Director - Services for Communities and the Head of Housing and Environment along with five elected members (three from the Administration and two from the Opposition) and a representative from ELTRP.
- 3.7 As a significant housing management policy there is a requirement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to consult with tenants and Registered Tenants Organisations. It is envisaged that the consultation exercise involving the public and staff will be conducted in the spring of 2013.
- 3.8 It is envisaged that subject to the PID's approval in October 2012 the revised policy could be implemented in the summer of 2013.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any changes to the allocations policy should enable the Council to meet its legal obligations under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and associated legislation as well as help meet the Council's own corporate priorities as set out in the Council Plan.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out on the proposed policy and throughout the process of developing the policy. A further EIA will be carried out prior to seeking Cabinet approval of the finalised policy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The policy itself will be cost neutral but there will be costs incurred as part of its development. These should be restricted to staff time, consultation and IT system enhancements (if required).
- 6.2 Personnel – None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 New Housing Allocations Policy – Cabinet Paper 13 March 2007

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