

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....17th February 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Review of Choice Based Allocations Policy

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet noted that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was a member of the Compass Scheme. This is a sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, which operated social housing lettings throughout the Tees Valley.

In addition to Stockton Borough Council, the Compass partnership was comprised of:

- a) Tristar Homes
- b) Erimus Housing
- c) Middlesbrough Council
- d) Hartlepool Borough Council
- e) Housing Hartlepool
- f) Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- g) Coast & Country
- h) Darlington Borough Council

The partnership developed and agreed a common allocations policy which had been in operation since July 2009 and an agreement was made to review the policy after 6 months to ensure that it was relevant in respect of Government guidance and legislation and fit for purpose in respect of delivery and meeting objectives. A sub-regional task group was formed to carry out this review, and a programme developed for reviewing all sections of the policy.

The proposed amendments to the policy were subject to extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and the responses and comments received influenced the final proposals.

Members were provided with a copy of the consultation report including the proposed amendments.

It was noted that a number of social housing reform measures had been

proposed by the Government, in the recent Communities & Local Government consultation paper, "Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing". A number of key changes were proposed to allocations' frameworks, to ensure they were aligned with local priorities. These include:

- i. the introduction of fixed term tenancies for new housing association tenants, although certain tenants may be offered longer or tenancies on existing terms if they are transferring;
- ii. for tenants whose fixed term tenancies are due to end, assistance may be given to enable them to access either private rented or low cost home ownership accommodation;
- iii. empty properties that are brought back into use may be leased by housing associations and offered as social housing tenancies;
- iv. applicants to whom a homelessness duty is accepted may be offered short term fixed tenancies within the private rented sector; and,
- v. social housing waiting lists may be limited only to those who have an urgent or high need for re-housing.

It was likely that a future policy review needs to be undertaken to consider the reforms that were agreed following consultation, and how they would be implemented at a local level within the policy framework.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the choice based allocations policy be approved but will not be implemented until consideration is given to any further policy changes arising from the consultation paper 'A Fairer Future For Social Housing' which is anticipated early May 2011. The reason for this is the cost of potentially two separate IT system updates.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the sub regional choice based allocations policy is fit for purpose and relevant.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on 25 February 2011

Proper Officer  
21 February 2011