

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	30th JANUARY 2020	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	paul.whittingham@southderbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: (See Notes)

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the responses to the consultation on the Housing Allocations Policy are accepted for inclusion within a revised policy which will be presented to the Housing and Community Services Committee later this year.
- 1.2 That the Committee agrees to review the options for the procurement of a new Choice Based lettings system during 2020/21.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 This report contains a summary of responses from the public and partner agencies to the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy which were reported to the Housing and Community Services Committee in June 2019.
- 2.2 The report also confirms the need to replace the current software that delivers the Choice Based Lettings system and the intention to review partnership and direct procurement options for this.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Housing and Community Services Committee agreed for a number of proposed changes to the Housing Allocations to be consulted on in June 2019.
- 3.2 Due to a very poor responses to the initial consultation, the consultation period was extended until November 2019.
- 3.3 This has provided a sufficient response from the public to the proposals.
- 3.4 Most of the initial proposals have been accepted with one amendment to the proposals suggested for approval by this Committee.

4.0 Detail

4.1 Responses to Proposed Changes

- 4.2 The proposed changes and the response from partner agencies and the general public are contained in the table at Appendix A.

4.3 There is one amendment to the Policy which was suggested as part of the consultation exercise. This is:

- a. To increase the eligible maximum household income from the proposed £, per year to £60,000 per year. It was felt that the proposed limit would still exclude many households who are unable to either purchase their own homes or find affordable homes in the private sector. This will also help to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of applicants to take tenancies with Registered Providers in the area.

4.4 The consultation exercise also highlighted some areas of future work for the Housing Service in order to ensure that the Allocations Policy and Choice Based Letting System operates in a consistent and fair manner. This includes finding ways to make the application process less onerous for applicants and to review the designation of certain types of properties which may also confuse applicants as to their eligibility. These comments are also contained within the table at Appendix A.

4.5 The results of the consultation process will be incorporated within a final version of the Allocations Policy which will then undergo an Equality Impact Assessment and a review by the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services before being presented to the Housing and Community Services Committee later in the year.

4.6 Choice Based Lettings Software Procurement

4.7 The revised Allocations Policy will still operate on a Choice Based Lettings framework. This allows for properties to be advertised and for applicants to express their interest in properties that they are eligible for under the policy.

4.8 Due to changes in the configuration of this software ,currently provided by Civica, the current version of this product will not be supported after the end of the next financial year.

4.9 Consequently, the Council will need to procure new software to deliver this service. This may be as a stand-alone system or as part of a wider regional partnership with other housing providers. A further report to this Committee will provide some further details regarding the procurement of this system and any options for delivery in partnership with other providers.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications contained within this report. The financial implications of procuring a new Choice Based Lettings system will be detailed in a further report.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

6.1 There are no direct Employment Implications contained in this report.

Legal Implications

- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications within this report. The final version of the Allocation Policy will be reviewed by the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.3 The provision of Housing Allocation services makes a direct contribution to achieving the Council's aim of: Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable. With partners encourage independent living and keep residents healthy and happy in their homes.

Risk Impact

- 6.4 The Housing Allocations Policy has a direct impact on the Service Delivery Risk, SD7 - Insufficient supply of affordable homes to meet Council needs relating to allocations and homelessness.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 The proposed changes to the Allocations Policy have been subject to a consultation process that consisted of a wide range of methods including, on line face to face and focus group consultation.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 The final version of the Allocations Policy will undergo an Equality Impact assessment before being presented to the Housing and Community Services Committee.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 The delivery of a fair and transparent Housing Allocations Policy, makes a direct contribution to the Sustainable Communities Strategy theme- "Families who are most vulnerable receive the support they need".

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 The delivery of on-line Housing Allocation services rather than paper-based application systems is a more environmentally sustainable option.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 That the results of the consultation process should be incorporated within a new Housing Allocations Policy.
- 8.2 That the Council should consider the options for procurement and delivery of new software systems to support the effective delivery of this service.

9.0 Background Papers

Appendix A: Consultation response matrix.

Notes:

- * Category – Please see the Committee Terms Of Reference . This shows which committee is responsible for each function and whether it has delegated authority to make a decision, or needs to refer it elsewhere with a recommendation.
- ** Open/Exempt - All reports should be considered in the open section of the meeting, unless it is likely that exempt information would be disclosed. Please see the [Access to Information Procedure Rules](#) for more guidance.
- *** Committee Terms Of Reference in [Responsibility for Functions - Committees](#).