

## **REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Members to consider the adoption of a revised Allocation Policy and points scheme.
- 1.2 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a publicised formal Allocation Policy which determines the authority's priorities and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing, under Section 168, Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In February 2000, Members agreed a draft Allocation Policy and authorised its release for consultation with tenants, those on the Housing Register, our partner Housing Associations and a Social Housing Welfare Organisation (Shelter), operating in the District, under the terms of Section 102-103 of the Housing Act 1985. Copies of the Draft Allocation Policy were also on deposit at the Council Offices, Civic Suite and local Libraries.
- 2.2 The general consultation period ended on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2000, but Housing Associations and Shelter were given until May to comment.
- 2.3 The Council were required to take into account any comments and observations, and any necessary amendments were made to the draft proposals.
- 2.4 On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2000 a report was prepared for the Sub-Committee to consider the adoption of the revised Allocation Policy from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2000. This was subsequently removed from the Agenda because of the introduction of the Homes Bill in July 2000, which was proposing radical changes to the way local authorities allocate properties.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Council has a legal obligation to provide copies of its formal Allocation Policy and Points Scheme, which it is currently unable to do in an easily understandable form.
- 3.2 On 16 August 2001, the Appeals Panel considered a case where criticisms was levelled at the Council for not having such a document.

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- 3.3 The Homes Bill was dropped due to the time constraints of the General Election, but Part Two has been renamed the Homelessness Bill and is currently at the Government Committee stage, with the third reading due in October 2001. It is expected to receive Royal Assent before the end of the year and become law from April 2002.
- 3.4 The current green paper guidelines suggest that Rochford will have to make amendments to this revised Allocation Policy in order to have an integrated policy on homelessness and the allocation of social housing. This includes removing blanket exclusions to the Housing Register, offering more choice and having an open, transparent system.
- 3.5 However it is unlikely that Rochford along with many other Councils would be able to re-write its policy and carry out the necessary consultation much before April 2002 in order to meet the new legal framework. This would leave the Council without a formal published policy for another six months and could create further legal problems.
- 3.6 In the meantime the adoption of the appended policy would provide a formal and clear guide, which was the product of consultation between Members of the Tenant Involvement Steering Group (TISG), Officers and Tenants' Representatives. It would also provide a more fair and equitable system of allocating limited council housing to those in the greatest need.

#### **4 TIMETABLE**

- 4.1 The remaining stages for implementing the new policy are set out below.

12 <sup>th</sup> September 2001	Consideration of submissions and final decision on Allocation Policy and Points System.
2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2001	Ratification by Community Services Committee
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2001	New Policy in force

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Budget provision has been made in the Housing Revenue Account for 2001/2.

#### **6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Major policy changes of this nature need to follow a process of statutory consultation in accordance with Section 168 Housing Act 1996, which has been adhered to.

#### **7 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

The adoption of the revised Allocation Policy and Points Scheme as specified in the appendix. (HRHM)

S J Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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**Background Papers:**

Chartered Institute of Housing – Housing Management Standards Manual  
Homelessness Bill 2001-2002

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