
Environment Scrutiny Committee – 5th September, 2012

Report of the Assistant Director of Housing Services

Establishment of a Housing Working Group

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 For Members of this Scrutiny Committee to agree to the establishment of a cross party Housing Working Group.

2. Background

- 2.1 Some Members will recall that in September 2006 the then Select Committee on the Environment agreed to establish an all party Choice Based Lettings Working Group to oversee and monitor the Choice Based Lettings pilot, the banding criteria and associated issues.
- 2.2 The Working Group proved to be a successful business model. The advantages being:
- With officers acting in the capacity of advisers it allowed for detailed debate on individual topics and/or issues.
 - Recommendations were then presented to the Select Committee for additional direction/scrutiny.
 - Decision making, as required, was then through the Council's procedures of either Decision Sheet or Cabinet.
- 2.3 A decision was taken last municipal year that the Working Group was no longer required and that all business could be incorporated into the main Committee Agenda.
- 2.4 On 2nd August 2012 a meeting was held with Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Housing, and his advisers Councillors A Finch, R Body and K Casey, to consider policy issues facing Housing. Appendix 'A' outlines broadly the issues.
- 2.5 When considering a process for policy development and decision making, it was agreed that a Working Group model (based on the successful Choice Based Lettings model) should be developed. As this Scrutiny Committee has the remit for 'overview and scrutiny of matters relating to Housing' it was felt that the Working Group should be made up of Members of this Committee plus open invitations to the Cabinet Members' advisers.

4. Finance

- 4.1 Any associated costs will be met from existing budgets.

5. Law

5.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 empowers the Council to do anything, which is incidental or is conducive to the discharge of its functions.

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1 This report in itself does not have any equality impact implications.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That Members agree to the establishment of a cross party Housing Working Group.

7.2 That in addition to Members of this Committee there is an open invitation to the Cabinet Members' advisers.

7.3 The first meeting of the Group is convened as quickly as possible to establish a work plan and priorities.



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Policy Issues (not in any order of priority)

- 1) Best use of stock
- 2) Review of allocations
- 3) Implications of Welfare Reforms and Localism Act
- 4) Right to Buy
- 5) Void management
- 6) Anti-social behaviour
- 7) Tenant's own repairs.