

## **Update on the Allocations policy consultation-briefing for Overview and Scrutiny-17<sup>th</sup> September 2012.**

### **Introduction**

The Localism Act 2011 changes the rules and regulations relating to a number of housing policies. Local authorities have greater freedom to determine their own allocation policies and are encouraged to consider giving higher priority for certain types of households including working people, armed forces and those giving something back to the community. The draft Allocations policy proposes major changes to the way social housing is allocated in the future. Consultation with all relevant stakeholders is therefore required before changes are made.

### **Summary**

This consultation commenced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012, and will be completed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012.

The outcome of the consultation so far is as follows:

- There have been 154 completed questionnaires representing a 1.6% response rate
- 51.9% of customers agree that Northampton Borough Council should provide priority in a fair and just way to employed applicants over those not employed with the same housing need, irrespective of the time on the Housing Register with 41.5% disagreeing with this new approach
- 61.7% of customers agree that Northampton Borough Council should create strong communities with a broad mixture of residents, with the development of a Local Lettings Plans only for significant new areas of residential development 23% disagreeing with this new approach
- 80.8% of customers agree that Northampton Borough Council should limit the access to housing to only Northampton residents who have lived in the Borough for a minimum of 6 months out of the last year or 3 years out of the last 5 years. 16.3% of customers disagree with this approach
- 45.2% of customers agree that customers in Band C and D should be removed from the Housing Register. 41.3% customers disagree with this approach
- 65.6% of customers agree that people providing substantial amounts of formal paid care to the previous tenant should succeed to the tenancy. 23.5% disagree with this approach

- 74.7% of customers agree that customers who have lived in the tenant's home for 20 years should succeed to the tenancy. 14.8% disagree with this new approach.
- 80.5% of customers agree that vulnerable people living in the household whom the Council would have a duty to re-house in another property if they were made homeless should succeed to the tenancy. 10.5% of customers disagree with this new approach.
- 87.6% of customers agree that Northampton Borough Council should suspend tenants from bidding for new properties if they fail to keep the existing property in good condition. 8.2% of customers disagree with this new approach.
- 69.7% of customers agree that the Council should suspend housing register applicants for a 12-month period for refusing three offers of accommodation. 21.1% of customers disagree with this new approach
- 82.6% of customers agree that the Council should suspend housing register customers for 12 months for failing to attend three viewing appointments. 11.8% of customers disagree with this approach
- 44% of customers agree that Social Housing should be allocated on a first come/first served basis. 46.1% of customers disagree with this approach
- 55.6% of customers agree that employed residents should be given some priority in the allocation of affordable housing. 40.1% disagree with this approach.
- 56.4% of customers agree that people in social housing on higher incomes should pay more towards their rent. 35.2% of customers disagree with this approach
- 57.4% of customers agree that allowing Council tenants who move in to the private rented sector, due to overcrowding should remain on the housing register. 28.4% of customers disagree with this approach
- 85.9% of customers agree that the Council definition of a household should be the applicant, partner and their children, only making exceptions to this for dependent relatives who cannot live independently. 5.6% of customers disagree with this approach.
- 71.1% of customers agree that the Council should only offer households transferred due an emergency a property on a like for like basis. 12.7% of customers disagree with this approach
- 69% of customers agree that the Council should direct applicants with assets worth more that £16,000 for a single person and £32,000 for a couple to low cost home-ownership schemes, rather than allocate a property via the Housing Register. 22.5% of customers disagree with this approach

- 88.7% of customers agree that vulnerable people should be given priority for housing. 6.3% of customers disagree with this approach.
- 9,500 letters were issued to customers and 154 questionnaires were completed on line during the consultation process resulting in 1.6% of questionnaires being completed so far.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that Northampton Borough Council has support for introducing the main changes to the Housing Allocations scheme. A series of focus groups will take place during September to obtain more feedback from customers on the proposed changes. The consultation will also be promoted by the September issue of "My Home" magazine. Housing officers will be carrying a supply of hard copy questionnaires with them to distribute when in their local areas. A further review of responses will be undertaken in mid- September to identify if there a need for further pro-active approaches to increase the number of completed questionnaires.

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**4<sup>th</sup> September 2012**