

## STOCKPORT COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CABINET– SUMMARY SHEET

**Subject:** Housing Allocations Policy Amendments

**Report to Cabinet**

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Report of:** (a) Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport

**Key Decision:** (b) Y

Forward Plan ☒ General Exception ☐ Special Urgency ☐ (Mark with a Y if applicable)

#### **Summary:**

Under Part 6 of the 1996 Housing Act all local authorities are obliged to have a published housing allocation policy that explains how they will allocate their housing stock, including who qualifies to apply, how households will be prioritised and the processes to be used.

To facilitate the priorities within the Housing Strategy 2016-2021 and Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2021-2024, the Councils' Allocation Policy has been reviewed. The policy details how the Councils' commitment to meeting housing needs may be achieved by making best use of existing stock through supporting existing tenants to move through mutual exchanges, and continuing to utilise options such as shared tenancies for young people.

The Allocation Policy proposes a number of amendments from the last time it was reviewed in 2018. This is in light of government announcements, best practice in the field and new guidance in relation to members of the armed forces community. The proposed amendments relate to:

- Eligibility criteria due to behaviour or rent arrears
- Priority for armed forces applicants
- Priority for care leavers
- Wording in relation to homeless applicants following the introduction of the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act
- The length of the Homechoice 'bidding period'
- Resetting a goal of 75% of lets through Homechoice to reflect lower numbers of void properties becoming available.

As per the guidance, consultations on the proposed amendments were carried out with partner Register Providers and tenants.

The full Allocation Policy 2021 with the proposed changes has been included at appendix 1.

#### **Comments/Views of the Cabinet Member: (c)**

The supply of the Council's available housing in Stockport is considerably less than the demand and, therefore, it is essential to have in place an Allocations Policy that will ensure that applications are dealt with fairly and allocations made on the basis of need.

The Council's current Allocation Policy was last amended in 2018, and the changes proposed do not substantially change the prioritisation it affords to the majority of applicants or its structure. However, they represent incremental development of the allocation process to make it more inclusive, effectively reflect the obligations towards the armed forces and care leavers, increase efficiency and ensure the Policy reflects best practice and is up to date with its drafting.

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**Recommendation(s) of Cabinet Member: (d)**

- That the Cabinet note the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocation Policy
- That the Cabinet approve the proposed new Council's Housing Allocation Policy (Appendix 1)

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**Relevant Scrutiny Committee** (if decision called in): **(e)**  
Communities & Housing

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**Background Papers** (if report for publication): **(f)**

Contact person for accessing  
background papers and discussing the report

**Officer: Andy Kippax**  
**Tel: 0161-474-4319**

**'Urgent Business': (g)**

**Yes/ No (Please circle)**

**Certification** (if applicable)

This report should be considered as 'urgent business' and the decision exempted from 'call-in' for the following reason(s):

The written consent of Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer/ Borough Treasurer for the decision to be treated as 'urgent business' was obtained on /will be obtained before the decision is implemented.

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