

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee	22 May 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Amendment to Allocations Policy	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>This report seeks approval from Members for an amendment to the City of London's housing allocation scheme that makes provision for the use of local lettings policies. Such policies allow social landlords the flexibility to make lettings outside of the overarching allocations scheme in line with the agreed "local lettings policy" in order to respond to specific needs or circumstances.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the amendment to the City's allocations scheme that is proposed.</li> </ul>	

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The City's allocation scheme – "City of London Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy 2012" – was approved by Community and Children's Services Grand Committee on 12 December 2012. This fulfils a requirement of the Housing Act 1996 for all housing authorities to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. Housing allocations must be made in accordance with that scheme.

### **Current Position**

2. The City's allocation scheme sets out the priorities for allocating housing. In accordance with legislation it gives reasonable preference to certain groups, such as those owed a homelessness duty. However, the City's scheme does not make provision for the use of "local lettings policies" and therefore lacks the potential and flexibility to respond to specific circumstances or needs.
3. The Housing Act 1996 enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories. This is the statutory basis for so-

called 'local lettings policies' which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives. Such objectives may include:

- to increase the number of lets to those in employment or training
  - to lower child density
  - to balance the number and ages of children to avoid a large concentration of older or younger children
  - to make the best use of stock allowing a level of under-occupation / over-crowding, and
  - to create a balanced neighbourhood.
4. Local lettings policies will normally be time limited and their nature and scope must be published alongside the allocation scheme. Where used, they must not dominate the allocations scheme at the expense of the statutory reasonable preference categories. Overall, the City must still be able to demonstrate its allocation scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not.

## **Proposals**

5. It is proposed that Members approve an amendment to the allocations scheme that will allow for the use local lettings policies. This amendment would see the addition of the wording that is set out in Appendix 1.
6. Such an amendment does not in itself determine the priorities by which properties subject to a local lettings policy are allocated. It merely allows the City to engage in the development of such policies. The detail of an individual local lettings policy will be subject to separate formal agreement. It is proposed that this is through the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

7. The City's Corporate Strategy seeks a world class City which supports our communities through the appropriate provision of housing, and supports a safer and stronger City through supporting community cohesion. This amendment supports the delivery of that vision, and is integral to the City's strategic priorities for housing, its (forthcoming) Homelessness Strategy and its allocations scheme.

## **Implications**

8. There are no additional legal, financial or HR implications arising from this report.

## **Conclusion**

9. In permitting the development and use of local lettings policies, the amendment to the Allocations Policy proposed in this report will ensure it contains the flexibility to respond to specific local needs and/or conditions that may arise.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Local Lettings Policies: proposed addition to Allocations Policy

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## **Appendix 1 – Local Lettings Policies: proposed addition to Allocations Policy**

Where the City considers that there is specific need to respond to local conditions, we will engage in and support the development of local lettings policies within our housing stock.

These policies will normally be time limited and the objectives may include targets:

- (a) to increase the number of lets to those in employment or training
- (b) to lower child density
- (c) to balance the number and ages of children to avoid a large concentration of older or younger children
- (d) to make the best use of stock allowing a level of under-occupation / over-crowding
- (e) to enable new schemes to be allocated to a mixture of tenants in order to develop a sustainable community
- (f) to enable the City to manage particular business needs
- (g) to enable households to return to an area they left for redevelopment to take place.

This list is not exhaustive and local lettings plans may be agreed in other circumstances where there is evidence that the local community would benefit from such a plan and there is no significant adverse impact on other communities.

All local lettings and scheme-specific plans will be subject to formal approval. Each will have clear criteria and possibly their own qualification requirements, which are openly published. When a property which is being advertised is subject to a local lettings plan, this will be stated clearly

Any local lettings plan will be agreed for a limited time, after which it will be reviewed, and lettings will revert to the main allocations scheme if appropriate.