

**Terms of Reference**

**Head of Housing and Performance**

**Allocation of Housing Accommodation**

**March 2010**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Audit Plan for 2009/10 includes an allocation for the review of the Council's Allocation of Housing Accommodation.
- 1.2 Under the Housing Act 1996, amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Local Authorities have a duty to determine priorities for the allocation of housing to eligible persons, and to define the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing accommodation.

## 2. Objectives

The following audit objectives have been identified for the review.

- 2.1 To ensure that the Council has an allocation scheme for determining priorities for the allocation of housing accommodation and that this is in line with key legislation / guidance.

This will involve reviewing the Council's Allocation Policy / framework to ensure that it meets the requirements of the following key areas of legislation / guidance:-

- a) the housing accommodation is only allocated to qualifying persons;
  - b) the priority scheme is framed so that preference is given to those persons as specified in the legislation.
- 2.2 To ensure that there are adequate procedures and processes in place covering all aspects of the housing allocation process and these processes are being complied with.

In order to assess this, we will cover the following:-

- a) Roles and responsibilities covering the administration of the allocation of housing accommodation, including the decision making process;
- b) The procedures covering an applicants right for a review of the decision on their housing application / suitability of the accommodation allocated;
- c) Management information is produced to ensure that the defined procedures / processes are being complied with.

On a sample basis, we will check that the procedures are being followed and the scheme is being adhered to when accommodation is assigned.

### 3. Approach to the work

We will adopt the following approach to the audit:-

- 3.1 To discuss with relevant service managers and staff what systems and procedures are in operation in relation to the identified objectives.
- 3.2 To review the systems and procedures in place to ensure that they are well controlled, meet the defined objectives timely, effectively and economically.
- 3.3 To obtain relevant documentation, and test on a sample basis that the controls set up are working as expected.

### 4. Reporting

- 4.1 Initially, the draft report will be issued as a 'rough draft' in order for the relevant service manager to check for factual accuracy prior to the formal draft being issued. The formal draft report will be issued to the Head of Service, unless there are any fundamental weaknesses identified, in which case the relevant Corporate Director and the Head of Finance will also be issued a copy prior to the Final Report being issued.

- 4.2 It is intended to have a rough draft report prepared by the end of June 2010. Please note, that one of the major factors in our achievement of this timeframe is the provision of timely information required for the audit.

A meeting will be arranged to discuss the draft report prior to a final version being issued.

- 4.3 For your information, where an audit report has an overall opinion of weak/very weak and/or there are any significant/fundamental weaknesses we are required to provide the relevant Portfolio member a copy of the report/follow-up report.