

Title of Report:	Development of the Housing Allocations policy – progress report
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To update the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on the activity to date on the development of the Council's Housing Allocations policy.

Recommended Action: Note the contents of the report.

Task Group Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a request by the Executive, at its meeting of 10 January 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreed to assist in the development of a new policy for the allocation of social housing. This followed a significant shift in central government policy. On 21 February 2012, the OSMC further agreed that a small task group would be established to take forward the work.
- 1.2 This report sets out the work that has been undertaken to date by the task group, the intended time line for future activity and invites comment on the draft policy.

2. Task Group membership

- 2.1 The task group comprises Councillors Dominic Boeck, Garth Simpson and Tony Vickers. Councillor Boeck has been elected Chairman.

3. Activity to date

- 3.1 Whilst officers in the Housing Service have been carrying out most of the work in the development of the new policy, the task group has been engaging with them at key points and has provided both challenge to and opinion on officers' proposals.
- 3.2 As previously advised, the task group met three times and have assisted in developing a detailed draft Housing Allocations Policy. This policy is at Appendix 1 for Members' comment. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the key changes proposed in the draft policy.

4. Future activity

- 4.1 The consultation on the draft Housing Allocations Policy commenced on 24th April 2013 and closes on 21st July 2013.
- 4.2 All applicants on the Common Housing Register have received or will receive a letter or e-mail advising them of the consultation and the links to the relevant web pages to find the policy documents and on-line survey. Hard copies can be provided upon request.
- 4.3 Similarly, all relevant agencies and organisations, for example, Social Services, Housing Associations and other stakeholders, have received an e-mail explaining about the consultation. The consultation is on the Council's Homechoice web page and has also been loaded onto Consultation Finder.
- 4.4 During the consultation period, officers will work with Locata to ensure that the system is capable of delivering the housing register and choice based lettings in line with the new policy. In addition, testing will be undertaken of the proposed housing needs pointing system to ensure that it achieves the outcomes anticipated by the new policy.
- 4.5 A further meeting of the task group will be held in August to review the consultation responses, along with the outcomes of the testing, with the final draft due for consideration and approval at Executive in October 2013.
- 4.6 Subject to Executive approval, the new Housing Allocations Policy will be implemented between November 2013 and January 2014.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission note the progress of the policy's development and comment on the draft as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Housing Allocations Policy

Appendix B – Allocations Consultation Summary