

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT:

**ESTABLISHMENT OF PRE-DECISION TASK AND FINISH GROUP
(DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENCY SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS
POLICY)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Confirm the establishment of a pre-decision Task and Finish group, to develop an emergency allocations policy for social housing in Carmarthenshire;
- Confirm the membership of the pre-task and finish group; and
- Agree the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- The rationale and process for the development of an emergency allocation policy through a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group; and
- Establishment of Task and Finish Group.

Reasons:

- To allow a cross party Task and Finish of Community and Regeneration Scrutiny to develop an emergency policy for submission to the Cabinet for consideration.

To be referred to the Cabinet / Council for decision: YES

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: -

Cllr Linda Evans- Cabinet Member for Homes and Deputy Leader

Directorate

Communities

Name of Head of Service:

Jonathan Morgan

Report Author: Angie Bowen

Designations:

Head of Housing

Housing Hwb Manager

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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1. What is the context?

Housing Options and Homelessness services are facing unprecedented and increased demand due to:

- “No one left behind” approach to ensure everyone has a safe and secure place to live and to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatable.
- Unintended consequences of introduction of new Rented Homes Act;
- Huge pressures in general market in terms of house prices and rents;
- Ukraine re-settlement programme; and
- UK wide proposed asylum dispersal scheme.

As a result, and as part of a wider programme on intervention, we would like to establish a Scrutiny task and finish group to explore options to revise the current Social Housing Allocations Policy (SHAP)

2. Why do we need to develop a new emergency allocation policy?

We are experiencing, along with all Local Authorities in Wales, an unprecedented situation for housing where demand is exceeding supply, with the position significantly worsening in the last few weeks because of external factors.

As an authority we have also made some rapid changes and restructured services to enable us to move from the reactive stage to prevention and bring together the main elements of the prevention programme under one umbrella.

Whilst the system has, with some difficulty, coped to date the signs are now that we are seeing severe stress in the system. This includes:

- More than 2000 people projected as presenting homeless by the end of the year. This is more than 20% higher than pre pandemic levels;
- During 2022/23 there is projected to be a 33% increase in the number of households we have a full duty to rehouse (440 households projected); and
- In addition to this, the number waiting for housing for whom we have a current full duty to house has risen from 180 households in 2021 to 327 at the end of June 2022.

We believe the current policy is not fit for purpose and needs revising. The task and finish group will:

- Assess the current demands on the housing options and homelessness service;
- Develop proposals for a new policy; and
- Confirm proposals to be considered by Cabinet.

It is anticipated the group will meet four times (maximum) and finalise its work within one month of starting

Recommendations

- To confirm the rationale and process for the development of emergency allocation policy through a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group; and
- To confirm the establishment of the Task and Finish Group.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	NO
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Head of Housing

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	YES	YES	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Any proposed interim changes, because of the Task and Finish Group's work, will require formal political approval.

Community tensions could also arise if the approach is not considered fair and proportionate to the circumstances.

2. Legal

It should be noted that in the intervening period, pending the development of an emergency policy, the Head of Housing will be using his delegated authority to direct match to properties on a significantly greater scale.

3. Finance

Failure to respond to the current situation could result in significant financial pressures around the use of temporary accommodation and the inability to move households on to more permanent accommodation.

5.Risk Management Issues

Failure to instigate some immediate proposals around availability of more permanent accommodation could result in:

- The overall housing system in the County “silting up” with little move-on opportunities to permanent accommodation;
- Increased use of temporary, and more expensive accommodation, to meet housing need; and
- Perception that we are not looking at more sustainable plans for the general homeless population in the County.

6.Physical Assets

Council housing will be used as solutions for temporary as well as permanent solutions.

7.Staffing Implications

A new “Housing Hwb” structure was approved in May 2022.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Head of Housing

1. Local Member(s)

Local members will be informed of any vacant homes and when the property has been successfully allocated in their wards. It is intended that discussions will also take place with political groups after Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee discussions.

2. Community / Town Council

n/a at current time.

3. Relevant Partners

Discussions will take place with RSL colleagues as part of the policy development.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Managers and Team Leaders have been fully involved in the development of the proposals

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**
YES

Include any observations here

Cabinet Member for Homes and Deputy Leader supports further discussion and to explore options at Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THERE ARE NONE