Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
26th January 2023

Subject: COMMUNITIES, HOMES AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP – EMERGENCY SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

PURPOSE: - To provide the Committee with the findings and recommendations of its Task and Finish Group

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THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO: To consider the findings of its Task and Finish Group established to develop an Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy and to recommend its adoption to Cabinet and Council as an interim measure pending the completion of a review of the Social Housing Allocations Policy ie:-

1. To recommend the Emergency Interim Housing Allocation Policy be approved by Council;

2. To recommend that Council approve that the current Choice Based Lettings Policy be suspended for approximately one year, and the Emergency Interim Social Housing Allocations Policy be implemented;

3. To recommend that the Scrutiny Committee receive updates at every meeting from officers on the effectiveness of the change;

4. To recommend that the content of the update reports include data for the previous period referring to:
   - Proportion of properties directly matched and those advertised
   - Banding of Clients directly matched
   - Number of properties directly matched and advertised by each community connection area, type of property and landlord
   - Proportion of direct matches that were successful
   - Number of direct matches where the client requests a review of the allocation, and the outcome of those reviews
   - Number of direct matches where the client refuses the allocation but doesn't request a review

Reason(s)

The adoption of the Emergency Social Housing Allocation Policy is required to address the unprecedented demand being experienced for Social Housing at the present time.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: - Councillor Linda Davies Cabinet Member for Homes and Deputy Leader

Directorate: Chief Executives	Designations:	
Report Author		
Councillor Deryk Cundy	Chair of the Task and Finish Group	
Kevin Thomas	Democratic Services Officer	kjthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRE- SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP – EMERGENCY SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

At its meeting held on the 29th September 2022 the Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Pre-Scrutiny Task & Finish Group to develop an Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy for Carmarthenshire to address the unprecedented situation where the Council, as with all Welsh Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords, was facing increased demand for social housing that was exceeding the level of supply, with the position having significantly worsened over recent weeks due to a number of external factors.

In selecting this topic for review the committee identified:

- A severe shortage of affordable housing across the county both in Social Housing and the Private Rented Sector
- The Authority had a duty to house persons who were presenting as homeless or facing homelessness
- With more and more applicants for social housing in severe need, the current letting policy was not fit for purpose and the Council needed to create an interim fairer, more transparent housing register better suited to the current situation in the county

Main Scope and Aims of the Group

The main Scope and Aims of the group were agreed as follows:

- To agree a simplified Interim Social Housing Allocations Policy based on data and evidence
- To create a transparent process for allocating homes during the current emergency period
- To align the development of a policy with the current review of the Social Housing Allocations Policy and the development of the Rapid Re-Housing Transition Plan in line with Welsh Government Policy to make homelessness rare, brief and unrepeated
- To develop an Emergency Interim Housing Allocations Policy and make recommendations to the Cabinet and Council for approval

The attached report details the Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendation to the Cabinet / Council for approval

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES 1 Task and Finish Report 2. Draft Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy

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: Linda Rees-Jones   Head of Administration and Law

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

Policy

A thorough Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out and will be made available once completed

Legal

Advice from Counsel has been received to ensure that the policy complies with all current legislation

Finance

As outlined in the 2023/24 Draft budget published on 13 December 2022, additional funding has been allocated to the Homelessness Prevention Budget line. This funding is to support local authorities to continue our 'no-one left out' approach and support ongoing homelessness prevention and relief interventions across Wales.

'No one left out' funding

Of this funding, WG are allocating **£15m** in 2023/24 to support the continuation of the 'no-one left out' approach. The purpose of the funding will be in line with the funding WG allocated in 2022/23. The 2023/24 allocation formula is 85% based on demand (in terms of average numbers in TA, TA costs and statutory demand for services).

The indicative allocation of 'No one left out' funding for Carmarthenshire for 2023/24 is £622,348.

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council

October 2022

Risk Management Issues

Failure to introduce the interim policy will risk people being homeless for longer than they need be and also an increase in people in temporary accommodation and people in TA for too long.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED YES	Councillor Linda Davies Evans – Housing and Deputy Leader

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

THERE ARE NONE