

**REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 19TH NOVEMBER 2001**

**REPORT ON: LETTINGS REVIEW**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**REPORT NO.: 721-2001**

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. To propose a comprehensive review of the lettings process for Council houses and outline a review methodology and timescales.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Housing Committee agrees the reconvening of the Convener of Housing's Working Group on Housing Allocations and the proposed remit contained in the report.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

4. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

None.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. **BACKGROUND**

- 6.1. A review of the lettings process is being recommended for the following reasons:
- 6.1.1. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 will impact upon the current lettings policy and procedures of all Scottish Local Authorities. It is therefore timely to review policies and House Letting Regulations in order to comply with the new legislation.
- 6.1.2. Recently a number of individual issues have been addressed with regard to the letting of Council housing. Most recently the Area Office Restructure and the above mentioned legislative changes prompted a report to Housing Committee on Local Area Points (Report No. 607-2001).

- 6.1.3. During the consultation on the Local Area Points report other lettings policies and processes were raised as being appropriate for review.
- 6.1.4. The Property Shop pilot scheme has demonstrated that a more proactive innovative approach to letting houses provides a more customer orientated service. A report on the evaluation of the Property Shop Pilot will be brought forward in the near future.
- 6.1.5. The ethos of continuous improvement and the continuing focus on void loss reduction has led to various aspects of the lettings service being addressed on an individual basis.
- 6.1.6. The Convener's Working Group on Housing Allocations previously sat to look closely at various aspects of the lettings process, most recently remitting Officers to look at issues relating to overcrowding and redevelopment priority.

It is now deemed appropriate that the Convener's Working Group on Housing Allocations is recalled to oversee the comprehensive lettings review proposed in this paper.

## 6.2. **Remit and Scope of the Review**

- 6.2.1. The remit for the review is to carry out a comprehensive review of the lettings process with the aim being to ensure that Council housing is accessible and the process used is as quick, efficient and responsive as possible.

The lettings process is defined as being from the point of first contact with the applicant to the signing of the Missive of Let.

- 6.2.2. It is important to recognise that some work on related lettings issues has been carried out recently and further work is ongoing.

It is proposed that this review not only takes account of recent recommendations from relevant reports but will also incorporate all ongoing work. By way of example, Appendix 1 highlights issues/topics raised by previous reviews/reports. Some have been progressed, some are ongoing and some are yet to be scheduled.

- 6.2.3. It is proposed that an Officers Group is remitted to investigate the various elements of the comprehensive review and report back to the Convener of Housing's Working Group on Housing Allocations when appropriate.

- 6.2.4. It is proposed that the Review elements will be undertaken in the following order:

Stage 1 : Legislative changes required to current lettings process due to the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001).

Stage 2 : Investigation of lettings models including needs based, choice based and any hybrid, and a recommendation on the optimum model to meet the needs of Dundee.

Stage 3 : An assessment of the mechanisms and structures required to achieve the preferred lettings model.

6.2.5. The Convener of Housing's Working Group on Housing Allocations comprises cross-party elected member representation, officers of the Housing Department, and other Departments as and when required, and representation from Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations (DFTA).

6.3. **Timescale**

6.3.1. It is proposed that the first meeting of the Convener of Housing's Working Group on Allocations would take place in December 2001 when the issue of legislative change will be discussed.

The deadline for implementation of the relevant legislative changes is April 2002.

Further timescale issues to be determined at the first meeting of the Working Group.

7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1. All Chief Officers and DFTA have been consulted on this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Elaine Zwirlein  
**DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 1**

- Amendment to application form.
- Direct input of applications.
- Changes to letting areas.
- Cyclical review of applications.
- Clean out waiting lists.
- Develop queue position letter.
- Letting regulations booklet.
- Written rules relating to letting regulations.
- Written procedures for application process.
- Vetting procedures.
- Six-year rule review.
- Medical priorities.
- 5.8 procedures.
- Choice based allocations.
- Consideration of Delft model.
- Reduce barriers to entry.
- Improve information collection.
- Improve communications with applicants.
- Definition of readily available, medium and high demand housing.