

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject: Proposed Amendment to Housing Allocations Policy

Date of Decision: 22.8.23

Decision Number:

3/2023

Background:

The Council is working in partnership with CHP to acquire larger family size properties homes to be used as affordable rented homes for Afghan families who have become homeless as a result of the closure of the Atlantic Hotel. Funding is being made available from government to contribute towards the cost at a rate that is more generous than usual making this a good opportunity to meet this need and also provide a supply of larger affordable homes for the use of other families in the future.

Officers highlighted to colleagues in the Home Office and DLUHC that legally local housing authorities can only provide affordable housing through their Housing Register and Allocations Policy. This means that with more than 50 other families already homeless and in temporary accommodation it would not be permissible to take advantage of this funding opportunity without making an amendment to our policy. We therefore propose to create a new clause which would allow the Council to nominate directly applicants of certain groups without the need to advertise properties which have been acquired specifically for that group as a result of specific funding.

Legally the Council must consult with those who may be directly affected, i.e. Registered Providers of social housing. As it is possible some of these homes could be acquired and available to let within the next few months we need to ensure both the consultation and policy change is completed beforehand. Although only CHP will be providing these homes, it is possible offers could be made by others and there may also be other opportunities in the future for other groups in housing need. For this reason, the consultation will not be specifically about the need to amend the policy for Afghan refugees but will instead cover the broader issue of non-supported general needs affordable housing that is provided by a Registered Provider through funding for a specific group.

Decision and Reasons for Urgency:

The Chief Executive decided to exercise their delegated authority to take urgent decisions and authorise the start of the process of consultation and amendment to Housing Allocations Policy. They did so on the grounds that there was a significant gap between the need and supply of larger homes and starting the process as soon as possible would be beneficial.

Supporting Information:

The Leader of the Council was consulted before taking the decision and had no objection to it.