

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 24th April, 2012
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)
3. **Declarations of Interest/Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda

4. **Public Speaking Time/ Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers

5. **Transport Update**

To consider an update on the current position of and future changes to Transport Services.
(Report to Follow)

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

Contact: James Morley
Tel: 01270 686465
E-Mail: james.morley@cheshireeast.gov.uk

6. **Draft Tenancy Strategy** (Pages 5 - 10)

To consider the draft Tenancy Strategy as part of the consultation currently being carried out on the policy.

7. **Cheshire Homechoice Common Housing Allocation Policy Review** (Pages 11 - 18)

To consider the proposed changes to the Cheshire Homechoice Housing Allocations Policy and offer comments as part of the review process.

8. **Work Programme** (Pages 19 - 22)

To consider the Work Programme

9. **Forward Plan** (Pages 23 - 26)

To consider the Forward Plan

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny
Committee**

held on Tuesday, 20th March, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Gilbert (Chairman)
Councillor G M Walton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, H Davenport, K Edwards, R Fletcher, P Hayes,
S Hogben, P Hoyland and A Thwaite

Apologies

Councillors A Barratt

OTHERS PRESENT

Councillor R Menlove

OFFICERS PRESENT

Caroline Simpson – Head of Development
Denise Griffiths – Facilities Manager
Michele Burrow – Senior Carbon Management Officer
Diane Bramall – Media Relations Officer
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

171 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no Members of the Committee who wished to declare any interests

172 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That subject to the following amendment the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2012 be approved as a correct record.

- (a) That in minute 167 final bullet point, the word “universally” be added between the words “wasn’t” and “supported”.

173 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak

174 **CORPORATE LANDLORD MODEL**

The Committee considered a presentation on the Council's Corporate Landlord Model from the Facilities Manager and the Head of Development.

Corporate Landlord was a project to centralise all property functions, to be managed by Assets. Currently the management of the Council's assets was fragmented. Some assets were being managed corporately by Assets and some were being managed by the services that used those assets such as buildings and land. The purpose of centralising all assets was to achieve efficiencies in the management and maintenance of assets.

With the exception of schools, highways infrastructure, and assets devolved/transferred as part of Local Service Delivery, all assets would be included in the Council's Corporate Landlord Model.

One of the methods that Assets would use to manage assets was a property helpdesk. The helpdesk would be a first point of call for any issues which building managers, service managers, councillors or the public had with any of the Council's assets. The helpdesk could be used to report building repairs and maintenance issues such as a leaking roof or broken windows as well as issues with cleaning or waste removal, and electrical issues such as fire alarms or automatic doors. It was suggested that the benefits of the helpdesk would be an improved customer service, more responsive maintenance service, people kept better informed of progress with issues and helped to manage contractors more effectively. The Committee were hopeful that the sheer number of assets and the likely number of calls from various sources would not overwhelm the helpdesk services and that operators had the necessary skills to deal with each call. Officers assured the Committee that the helpdesk would have sufficient resources and expertise to deal with the demand for the service.

The Committee was interested to know how the new system would perform and whether it would deliver savings, improve the management of assets, ensure disposal of surplus assets at a good rate of return and improve the devolution/transfer of assets as part of Local Service Delivery.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be noted.
- (b) That the Facilities Manager be requested to return to the Committee in six months with an update on how the system has been working.
- (c) That service managers be requested to give feedback on the effectiveness of the Corporate Landlord Model in six months time.

175 **CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME BRIEFING**

The Committee received a presentation on the Carbon Management Programme from the Senior Carbon Management Officer. The presentation was designed to brief Members of the Committee on the Carbon Management Programme to enable them to effectively scrutinise the Annual Review of the Carbon Management performance of the Council.

The presentation explained why carbon management was an issue and why it was important to reduce the Council's carbon emissions. The carbon management programme (CMP) was a five year plan endorsed by the Carbon Trust. The target of the CMP was to reduce the Council's CO₂ emissions by 25% by 2016 from the baseline level set in 2008. Currently 55 projects had been identified which would reduce emissions by 20%. Plans to achieve the remaining 5% of the target were yet to be identified. The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), informally known as the Carbon Tax, was a legal obligation for large organisations to pay £12 per tonne of CO₂ emissions produced each year. Cheshire East Council was not obliged to start paying for the CRC until the 2013/14 municipal year as the authority had been created after the introduction of the first phase of CRC. The second phase would begin in 2013 and it was expected that the rate would increase to £16 per tonne of CO₂ produced. It was calculated that this would cost Cheshire East Council £700,000 per annum. This created a financial incentive for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be noted and the Senior Carbon Management Officer be thanked.
- (b) That the Senior Carbon Management Officer be requested to attend the Committee meeting on 24 April to present the Carbon Management Annual Review for the Committee to consider.

176 **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group had considered the Scrutiny Annual Report at its last meeting. The Scrutiny Annual Report contained a section on Lessons Learned over the past year and Members of the Committee were asked to discuss their views on the performance of the Scrutiny Function and give their feedback on what had improved from the previous year and what could be done better in the future.

The Committee discussed the past year and gave feedback on how it felt the process could be improved.

RESOLVED- That the Committee's suggestions for the Annual Report be presented to the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group for consideration.

177 **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED- That the Work Programme be updated

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.30 pm

Councillor L Gilbert (Chairman)

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Report to: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of the meeting: 24th April 2012

Report of: Director of Places and Organisational Capacity

Subject/Title: Cheshire East Tenancy Strategy

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Macrae

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on all local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy which outlines our approach to flexible tenancies and enables Registered Providers of social housing to formulate their own tenancy policies. This report outlines the content of the Cheshire East draft Tenancy Strategy and seeks views from Members.

2.0 Decision Requested

2.1 To endorse the Cheshire East Tenancy Strategy.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Tenancy Strategy is currently going through a 12 week period of consultation which commenced on the 26th March 2012. This report outlines the content of the strategy and seeks the views of Members.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All Local Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications including -

6.1 **Carbon reduction - none**

6.2 **Health**

Housing is fundamental to the well being and prosperity of the Borough. There are direct connections between access to affordable, sustainable housing and health, educational attainment, carbon reduction and care for older people. The policy review aims to ensure that access to limited social housing stock is fair and transparent.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 The Localism Act 2011 (sections 150 - 153) places a duty on all Local Authorities to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy within 12 months of the provision coming into force. The strategy has to set out the matters to which registered providers of social housing in its district are to have regard to in formulating policies relating to tenancies and should contain the following:

- The kind of tenancies they grant,
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- Where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms and
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

Before adopting a Tenancy Strategy Local Authorities must:

- Send a copy of the draft strategy, or proposed modification, to every private registered provider of social housing for its district, and
- Give the private registered provider a reasonable opportunity to comment on those proposals.
- Consult such other persons as the Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe.

The authority must also have regard to:

- Its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996,
- Its current homelessness strategy under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The Tenancy Strategy only outlines the circumstances in which Registered Providers have to take due regard. There is nothing which stipulates that they must adhere to the strategy and therefore when formulating their policies they may decide not to follow the guidance of the Local Authority. We have tried to mitigate against this by working with the three main Registered Providers when producing the strategy to ensure that the content is workable for them.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The Localism Act 2011 places a duty on all local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy which sets out the matters which Registered Providers of social housing should have regard to when formulating their own tenancy policies.
- 10.2 In 2011 Cheshire East Strategic Housing services started a process of consultation with Registered Providers in order to work with them to produce a strategy which would meet the priorities of the authority, whilst ensuring that we did not make it too restrictive and unworkable for Registered Providers.
- 10.3 A workshop took place in November 2011 with both Members of Cheshire East and Board Members of the three main Registered Providers where the issue of flexible tenancies was debated. The comments and opinions influenced the development of the draft strategy.
- 10.4 The ability to offer flexible tenancies was met with a positive response and it was felt that it would enable us to use flexible tenancies as an opportunity to address key issues within the Borough, such as; how to make best use of Cheshire East's limited affordable housing stock, how to tackle under-occupation and how to improve stock turnover.
- 10.5 Contained within the strategy's vision are the issues we would expect a registered provider to consider when determining tenancy terms including:
- Enabling families to grow and develop without the threat of having to uproot their children from schools, which could threaten their educational attainment.
 - Enable those with special needs to establish support networks, access services and have a property adapted if necessary.
 - Give those needing an opportunity to turn their lives around the ability to access settled accommodation for an appropriate period of time.
 - Make the best use of our housing stock, reducing levels of under occupation and overcrowding across the authority.
- 10.6 When developing the strategy consideration was given to the local context, the local housing market, affordability rates, and need and demand and the findings are outlined within the strategy.
- 11.0 Type of tenancies** -The strategy outlines the type of tenancies available to registered providers which includes:
- Full assured social rent

- Full assured affordable rent
- Fixed-term social rent
- Fixed term affordable rent

We have also stated that we believe RP's should grant the most secure form of tenancies which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of the individual households, sustainability of the community and the efficient use of their housing stock and we have recommended that:

- Fixed-term tenancies should normally be offered for a minimum period of five years, including any probationary period.
- In certain circumstances, tenancies exceeding a five year period (for example a lifetime tenancy) may be granted for some tenants where appropriate, in order to provide an additional degree of stability and security. Cheshire East Council recommends that the following circumstances should be given due regard for tenancies exceeding five years: households who have dependent school-aged children attending a local school; those living in adapted properties, and those with a long-term support need.

12.0 Renewal of tenancies - outlined within the strategy is the renewal of tenancies and we have stated that we would expect in the majority of cases tenancies to be renewed taking into consideration the current circumstances of the household and the need for a property of the type and size that they presently occupy. It is also stated that in the event that a tenancy is not renewed due to under occupancy then the household would be given priority in line with Cheshire East's allocations policy.

13.0 Circumstances in which a tenancy would not be granted -In relation to the circumstances in which a tenancy should not be renewed the strategy states that in the following circumstances registered providers may consider not renewing the tenancy and these include:

1. Property under-occupied (this may not apply to young childless couples or those with families that may expand)
2. Property which is severely overcrowded – as defined in line with the Homechoice Allocations Policy (to prevent low quality housing conditions developing)
3. Suitability of property e.g. (where a property could suit the needs of another potential occupier of greater need- a bungalow for an elderly

couple or an adapted property that is no longer occupied by a person needing those adaptations.

4. The tenant has been a perpetrator of domestic violence, victims of DV who need to move to a more suitable location would be dealt with via tenancy management as will tenants suffering harassment or needing to move under the witness protection programme.
5. To balance tenant mix in an estate/development- this would need to be linked into any local lettings policies or neighbourhood/estate plans where they are used.
6. Change in tenant's circumstances- tenant has demonstrably a high enough income to comfortably afford market housing (to purchase) & arguably the social housing they are occupying would be better used by someone in greater need.
7. The conduct of the tenant throughout the fixed term is deemed to be unacceptable- this could include ASB, rent arrears or property management issues.

13.1 The strategy outlines what is expected of RP's should they not renew a tenancy, which includes giving six months notice and providing them with housing advice which will enable them to make informed housing decisions.

14.0 Access to Information

The full draft Tenancy Strategy is attached to this report:



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Managers\Reports\Af

Name: Karen Carsberg
Designation: Strategic Housing Manager
Tel No: 01270 686654
Email: Karen.carsberg@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 24th April 2012
Report of: Director of Places and Organisational Capacity
Subject/Title: Cheshire Homechoice Common Allocations
Policy Review
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Macrae

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the proposed changes to the Cheshire Homechoice Common Allocations Policy.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 To endorse the Cheshire East revised Allocations Policy.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The revised Cheshire East Allocations Policy is currently going through a 12 week period of consultation which commenced on the 26th March 2012. This report outlines the proposed changes to the strategy and seeks the views of Members.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Local Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications including -

- 6.1 **Carbon reduction - none**

6.2 **Health**

Housing is fundamental to the well being and prosperity of the Borough. There are direct connections between access to affordable, sustainable housing and health, educational attainment, carbon reduction and care for older people. The policy review aims to ensure that access to limited social housing stock is fair and transparent.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

7.1 There are no financial implications. No changes are proposed to the current financial arrangements for the Cheshire Homechoice Partnership that delivers the Choice based lettings service.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 The Borough Solicitor will be included in the consultation to confirm that the proposed changes will be authorised.

8.2 Under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) local authorities are required to have an allocations policy and procedure in place in order to allocate social housing and under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002) to make provision for homeless households.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The review of the common allocations policy will ensure that improvements are made in line with lessons learnt and updates in legislation to the allocation of social housing across the partnership.

9.2 The continuous improvement of the allocations policy is a fundamental part of ensuring the efficient implementation of choice based lettings.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 A report was presented to the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in June 2011 setting out the scope of the policy review. Cheshire Homechoice had been operating effectively for 12 months. However there were some areas of the allocation policy that needed improving or reviewing in the light of lessons learnt and proposed changes in the Localism Bill.

10.2 The review has been conducted alongside the passage of the Localism Bill through the House of Lords through to enactment . Three representatives from the Homechoice Partnership attended a day-long Seminar in London organised by the Housing Quality Network where eminent barristers who specialise in Housing Law gave their recommendations for reviewing allocations policy in line with changes in the Localism Act.

10.3 The Homechoice Board have given strategic direction to the review. A working group made up of operational officers from each of the partners was set up and have worked through the policy suggesting amendments for approval by the Board and then drafting the changes to the policy in response to the Boards requirements.

- 10.4 A Housing event was held on 8 November 2011 for Members and Registered Provider Board members. Proposed amendments to the allocations policy were presented in interactive workshops. The feedback report from the workshops can be obtained from the report writer.
- 10.5 The following proposals on what to change and what not to change in the reviewed policy were made either in response to the feedback from Members at the Housing Event or to decisions of the Homechoice Board.
- 10.5.1 In relation to priority it is proposed to change from a star awarded system ranging from 1* lowest priority to 5* highest priority to a banding assessment based on housing need ranging from Band E: lowest need to Band A: highest need. The change in terminology will emphasise a change in approach. Housing need will be the determining factor. Those with multiple issues will no longer be assessed on a cumulative basis but on their single most important need in relation to a need for re-housing. All current housing register applications will be reassessed under the new “need” assessment.

The bands are as follows:-

The Priority Band Assessment System

Bands

A

- Households assessed as statutorily homeless by Cheshire East Council, to whom a full housing duty is owed under the Homeless Legislation.
- Households who are unable to occupy their current accommodation.
- Households who meet the downsizing criteria (determination of the criteria has been set by the Cheshire and Warrington Housing Alliance).

B

- Households who have been assessed as potentially homeless
- Households who do not have access to a toilet or cooking facilities (“access” can be classed as access to shared or communal facilities)
- Households who are required to leave their home within 28 days as a result of a Prohibition Order served in relation to the premises under the Housing Act 2004 prohibiting use of all or part of the property, a Demolition Order served in relation to the premises under the Housing Act 2004, or a declaration of a Clearance Area affecting the premises served under the Housing Act 1985.
- Households who are leaving supported accommodation and are ready to move on (confirmed by accommodation provider).
- Households assessed with an urgent housing need

- Care Leavers with additional housing need
- Ex-armed forces personnel with additional housing need

C

- Households assessed as non statutorily homeless
- Those living in temporary accommodation awaiting a homeless decision.
- Households in supported accommodation (excluding sheltered accommodation), but not confirmed as ready to move on
- Households who are overcrowded – In alignment with Housing Benefit regulation
- Households who under occupy a property – In alignment with Housing Benefit regulations but do not meet downsizing requirements
- Households with a lack of security of tenure
- Households whose housing is impacting on a medical condition
- Households whose housing is impacting on their welfare

D

- Households who do not meet any of the reasonable preference criteria and/or are otherwise adequately housed

E

- Households who have no local connection to the sub region of Cheshire East
- Households who have had preference reduced

10.5.2 The policy has been amended throughout to place more of an emphasis on applicants being monitored to ensure they are engaging with support services in order to retain their priority assessment.

10.5.3 Accessibility of the housing register

The Localism Act 2011 gives Local Authorities a new and wide discretion to decide who may qualify to apply for social housing in their area. This was explained at the housing event with Members on the 8th November. It was explained that the housing register could be used as a central hub for anyone with a housing related issue to register their details and be given advice and information on all options which would be available in Cheshire East to assist in addressing their issue. This hub would include information for rehousing options as well as options for staying in their current accommodation for example information on access to private rented properties, affordable housing options, supported housing options and other available support services such as handymen services. Generally, Members felt that if the housing register were to be used in this way, then the register could be accessible to all as it would be a gateway to all housing solutions. However, if this service could not be

offered, then they would be in favour of restricting certain categories of applicants from registering. There were mixed opinions on who would be restricted from the housing register as a variety of exceptions categories were suggested which demonstrated the difficulty in trying to reach a consensus.

It was also acknowledged that by having an open register with the ability to provide the information on the range of options available would lead to people making informed decisions about their housing situation and responding in a timely and proactive way to address their housing issue. It was felt that closing the register to only a select few households could lead to households only approaching for advice and assistance when they reached crisis point which could be more complex and costly for the Housing service to respond to.

Following these conversations and a commitment from the Cheshire Homechoice project board to introduce a gateway model into Cheshire Homechoice, it is proposed to allow all households with a housing related issue to access the register so that they can access the hub of information. The only exceptions to this would be households who are ineligible to register due to immigration status and those who have had serious rent arrears or have committed serious acts of anti social behaviour.

10.5.4 Access to housing in rural parishes

At the Housing event there was no majority decision on whether to retain the Community Connection criteria or remove this priority whereby those who can demonstrate a connection to a rural area are given priority over someone who may be in greater housing need. All attendees agreed that if the criteria remained then the detail needed to be clearer, and should include connection via current or previous residence; immediate family or permanent employment.

The proposed reviewed section on Community Connection now reads:
“The partners of Cheshire Homechoice are mindful of the concerns of residents for stability and sustainability within their communities, but also of the need to foster diversity within those communities and facilitate geographical mobility within the Cheshire East Borough.
In some rural areas we may require applicants to demonstrate a community connection to that particular settlement. In these instances, any applicant currently registered with Cheshire Homechoice may bid, however, the property may be offered to the household in the greatest housing need with a community connection. In the absence of a bid from any applicant with a community connection, the property will be let to an applicant with no community connection.

In these cases a person will be deemed to have a community connection if they fulfil one or more of the criteria below. If there is more than one

applicant with a connection, then they will be considered in the order of priority banding and effective date.

Currently live or have lived or have lived within the boundaries of the Parish or adjoining parish and have done for at least 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years.

Have immediate family (sibling, daughter, son, parent, step-parent or adoptive parent) who are currently residing in the parish or adjoining parish and have done for at least 5 years.

Have a permanent contract of employment within the Parish or adjoining parish.

Making best use of a scarce resource

- 10.5.5 Statistics and evidence gathered since the inception of Cheshire Homechoice demonstrates that family housing is in extremely short supply but is in high demand. The ability to make best use of social housing stock has been highlighted as a key priority for the Cheshire and Warrington Housing Alliance.
- 10.5.6 In order to make the best use of housing stock for families; it is proposed that households who are under occupying and willing to downsize are to be placed in Band A as long as they meet the criteria established as part of the Cheshire and Warrington Housing Alliance Downsizing scheme. The scheme supports vulnerable people both financially and with practical assistance to move into smaller properties which are more suitable for their needs.
- 10.5.7 Households that are overcrowded are given additional priority to assist them in moving to larger accommodation. It is proposed that this is assessed in line with current Housing Benefit parameters that allow an additional bedroom for persons aged 16 or over. More recently the Department of Communities and Local Government has released a guidance document on housing allocation for consultation. In the document, overcrowding is assessed in a bedroom standard that sets the age limit at 21 for sharing a bedroom. Therefore, it is proposed that this be looked at again during the consultation on the review of the Cheshire Homechoice policy. Such an assessment would have the effect of making best use of social housing stock as households with over 16's sharing a bedroom would be encouraged to look for larger accommodation in the private housing sector.

Additional Priority groups

10.5.8 Consideration has been given to the following groups to determine whether the reviewed policy should award them additional priority over the average household in housing need.

- Careleavers. Currently Careleavers are not given a specific priority within the Cheshire homechoice policy. The Leaving Care Act 2000

provides for specific duties to children leaving the care of local authorities. It is the duty of local authorities to give care leavers "assistance of any kind to the extent that his welfare require it". It is clear in law that this includes accommodation and therefore, as corporate parents, the authority's responsibilities for the welfare of care leavers is high. It is therefore proposed to give them additional priority and place them in Band B where they are in housing need.

- Armed forces personnel. There is currently no additional priority awarded to army personnel in the policy which is being reviewed. However, there is a clear message from central Government to give priority to those leaving the armed forces or having left in the previous five years. In the review it is proposed that they would be given additional priority by placing them in Band B. In recognition of the mobile nature of service life it is also proposed that this group be exempt from the criteria on local connection.
- People in work: Examples of other local authorities giving priority to those in work were examined to determine whether this is a category of household who should be awarded additional priority on the housing register. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea gives priority only to those in work who are moving from temporary or supported accommodation to support their ability to continue to work. Westminster Council have a similar approach. Both award a small amount of priority through additional points, an option not available under the proposed banding system at Cheshire East. Manchester City Council does have a banding system and awards a priority by raising those in work up a band. Upon further discussion with Manchester City Council, it has been discovered that this does not provide value for money for the service due to the work required by staff to gather the evidence needed to be able to award the priority. A lean systems review of the homechoice service has recently been carried out and getting staff to gather this evidence would not be a lean process for the customer or the Local Authority.

Furthermore, due to the current economic climate and high risk of job cuts in all sectors, it was felt that this would be unfair on households struggling to find employment at the current time. The project board have also considered the impact of the welfare reform and the fact that more households will struggle to afford to access the private rented sector and if access to social housing were to be restricted as well to people who are dependent on welfare benefits then they could potentially be left with no accessible housing options in the area and create homelessness in Cheshire East.

Under the Localism Bill, Registered Providers will have the ability to offer fixed term tenancies to new tenants. At the end of the fixed term, a review of the households circumstances will be carried out

to determine whether to continue to offer a social housing tenancy to the household. If a household could afford another type of housing the registered provider could potentially end their tenancy agreement. Households could then have a claim under Section 8 of Human Rights Act if our Allocations Policy gave favourable preference to people in employment but the basis for non-renewal of flexible tenancies by RPs is due a households income level.

Priority to this group has therefore not been included in the reviewed policy.

10.5.8 All the proposals in the policy review will be subject to the outcome of the consultation.

10.6 The draft reviewed Housing Allocation Policy is now ready to progress to the public consultation stage. During this period the Policy will be submitted to to scrutiny Committee for comments and at the conclusion of the consultation the final reviewed Policy will be ready for Cabinet approval.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Victoria Kell
Designation: Housing Options Manager
Tel No: 01270 686655
Email: Victoria.kell@cheshireeast.gov.uk

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 24 April 2012
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To review items in the 2012 Work Programme, to consider the efficacy of existing items listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by Committee Members.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the work programme be received and noted.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is good practice to agree and review the Work Programme to enable effective management of the Committee's business.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Not known at this stage.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 7.1 None identified at the moment.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no identifiable risks.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 In reviewing the work programme, Members must pay close attention to the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy.

10.2 The schedule attached, has been updated in line with the Committees recommendations on 20 March 2012. Following this meeting the document will be updated so that all the appropriate targets will be included within the schedule.

10.3 In reviewing the work programme, Members must have regard to the general criteria which should be applied to all potential items, including Task and Finish reviews, when considering whether any Scrutiny activity is appropriate. Matters should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority
- Is the issue of key interest to the public
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service

10.4 If during the assessment process any of the following emerge, then the topic should be rejected:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere
- The matter is subjudice
- Scrutiny cannot add value or is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within the specified timescale

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: James Morley
Designation: Scrutiny Officer
Tel No: 01270 686465
Email: james.morley@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 13 April 2012

Issue	Description /Comments	Officer	Suggested by	Portfolio	Corporate Priority	Current Position	Date
Draft Tenancy Strategy	To consider the draft Tenancy Strategy as part of the consultation	Karen Carsberg	Portfolio Holder + Chairman	Prosperity Cllr Macrae	Nurture strong communities	On Target	24 April 2012
Common Housing Allocation Policy Review	To consider the proposed changes to the Common Housing Allocation Policy	Karen Carsberg	Portfolio Holder + Chairman	Prosperity Cllr Macrae	Nurture strong communities	On Target	24 April 2012
Transport Update	To consider an update on the current position and future changes to Transport	Chris Williams	Committee	Environmental Services Cllr Menlove	Nurture strong communities	On Target	24 April 2012
Carbon Management Programme – Annual Review	To consider the Annual Review of CMP and make recommendations for future developments/initiatives	Michele Burrow	Chairman	Environmental Services Cllr Menlove	Ensure a sustainable future	Deferred from 24 April	26 June 2012
Christmas Bin Collections	To consider a report of the arrangements for bin collections at Christmas	Ray Skip	Chairman	Environmental Services Cllr Menlove	Nurture strong communities	Deferred from 20 March	26 June 2012
Highways Maintenance Update	To receive a report on the first six months of the new contract	Mark Averill	Chairman	Environmental Services Cllr Menlove	Ensure a sustainable future	On Target	26 June 2012
High Speed Two (HS2)	To receive a briefing on the current status of HS2 in Cheshire East	Andrew Ross	Committee	Prosperity and Environmental Service	Ensure a sustainable future	Waiting for Officer confirmation	TBC
Alfresco Licensing Update	To consider a report on the 12 month review inc. income and costs	Mark Averill	Committee	Environmental Services Cllr Menlove	Nurture strong communities	On Target	18 September 2012
Car Parking Task Group	To review car park management	James Morley	Committee	Environmental Services	Ensure a sustainable future	On Target	Next meeting 26 April 2012

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Possible Items to Monitor or consider at future Meetings

- Community Transport Review – Suspended – Cllr Menlove
- Planning Enforcement – Possible Task and Finish Group (May/June) – Cllr Bailey
- Pre-Planning Application Service – Update September 2012 – Cllr Bailey
- Visitor Economy – Cllr Macrae
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund – Cllr Menlove
- Localism Act and Policy Implications – All
- Waste Needs Assessment/Recycling (informing Local Plan process) – Cllr Menlove
- Anaerobic Digesters – Cllr Menlove
- Street lighting strategy for Cheshire East – Cllr Menlove
- Development Management Transformation Project – Possible update on outstanding work – Cllr Bailey
- Household Waste Recovery Centres & Glass Bring Banks – Cllr Menlove

Dates of Future Committee Meetings

24 April 2012, 26 June 2012, 24 July 2012, 18 September 2012, 16 October 2012, 20 November 2012, 18 December 2012, 22 January 2013, 19 February 2013, 19 March 2013 and April 23 2013.

Dates of Future Cabinet Meetings

30 April 2012, 28 May 2012, 25 June 2012, 23 July 2012, 20 August 2012, 17 September 2012, 15 October 2012, 12 November 2012, 10 December 2012, 7 January 2013, 4 February 2013, 4 March 2013, 2 April 2013 and 29 April 2013.

Dates of Future Council Meetings

19 April 2012, 16 May 2012, 19 July 2012, 11 October 2012, 13 December 2012, 21 February 2013 and 18 April 2013.



FORWARD PLAN 1 MAY 2012 - 31 AUGUST 2012

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expect to take over the next four months. The Plan is rolled forward every month. It will next be published in mid May and will then contain all key decisions expected to be taken between 1 June and 30 September 2012. Key decisions are defined in the Councils Constitution.

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents may be viewed at any of the Councils Offices/Information Centres 6 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:-

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council ,
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686463

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents, the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A decision notice for each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, Council Information Centres and Council Offices.

The law and the Council's Constitution provides for urgent key decisions to be made. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

Forward Plan 1 May 2012 to 31 August 2012

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE10/11-49/1 Future Operation Knutsford Cinema	To decide on the future running and preferred operating model.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Cabinet Member for Prosperity	30 Apr 2012	Local community groups and Knutsford Town Council.	Health and Wellbeing	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-41 Future Operation of the Old Town Hall, Macclesfield	To decide upon the future running and preferred operating model for the Old Town Hall.	Cabinet Member for Prosperity	14 May 2012	With Macclesfield Charter Trustees and Macclesfield Forum.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-43 Congleton Town Centre Bridestones Extension Scheme	To consider amendments to the extension scheme.	Cabinet	28 May 2012	Congleton Town Council and the Developer.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-44 Review of the Interim Planning Policy on the Release of Housing Land	To approve and to recommend to Council the interim planning policy on the release of housing land.	Cabinet, Council	25 Jun 2012	With housing stakeholders, Parish Councils, Housing Market Partnership and the Local Plan database using the website, post and email.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-21 Cheshire Homechoice - Allocation Policy Review	To approve the allocation policy for adoption.	Cabinet	23 Jul 2012	Partner housing providers, Homechoice officers, housing benefits, Police and community safety, tenants and residents.	Environment and Prosperity 21st February 2012	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-30 Strategic Tenancy Strategy	In accordance with the Localism Act to publish a Tenancy Strategy setting out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by Social Landlords when producing their own policies, and on the granting and reissuing of tenancies.	Cabinet	23 Jul 2012	Registered Providers and their Board Members, Stakeholders. Further guidance awaited from DCLG.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-29 Crewe Green Link Road Highway Scheme - Revised Area of CPO	To consider an amended area for the compulsory purchase of land associated with this scheme.	Cabinet	20 Aug 2012	Affected land owners and developers.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-45 Cheshire East Local Plan Core Strategy	To approve and to recommend to Council the publication draft of the Cheshire East Core Strategy.	Cabinet, Council	12 Nov 2012	With housing, business and environment stakeholders, infrastructure providers, Parish Councils and local communities through the website, email post and general publicity.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)