

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods
Date	19 July 2018
Present	Councillor Douglas

5. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they had on the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

6. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018 be approved and then signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

7. Public Participation

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak and two written representations in relation to item 5 under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. The written representations were:

- a consultation response from the British Legion concerning the City of York Common Allocations Policy which contained a number of recommendations.
- a letter from Steve Galloway, a local resident, who was disappointed not to see the 'good tenant' scheme included in the new CYC Housing Policy.

8. Extension of Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing

The Executive Member considered a report that outlined new statutory duties in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), put forward amendments to the existing HMO implementation policy and changes to the fee structure to reflect the impact of those new duties on the service.

Officers gave insight into the new statutory duties, stated that they expected around 700 new applications as a result and that this would put a significant stress on the department. The officer recommendation was to use risk assessment application forms to determine whether an HMO was compliant. It was noted that the income generated by issuing licenses prior to visitation would help fund the increased number of inspections.

The Executive Member asked for clarification on how officers intended to ensure that properties and applicants were compliant via the risk assessment form.

Officers stated that any applicant completing the risk assessment form would be confirming that the information entered was correct and if any discrepancies were noted during at a later stage, a fine of up to £30,000 would be enforceable.

Resolved: That Option 1 be approved as follows:

To agree the altered implementation policy to include;

- i. risk assessing application forms to determine the time of our visit within the 5 year period, prioritising non-compliant properties first
- ii. a refresh of our existing fees, taking into consideration the new duties placed on our teams

Reason: The Council has a statutory duty to implement the new legislation, by adopting the new HMO policy it will continue to raise standards in the poorest performing sector.

9. Decision on Leaving North Yorkshire Home Choice and adopting a CYC Housing Allocation Policy

The Executive Member considered a report suggesting that York leave the North Yorkshire Home Choice (NYHC) partnership and agree to a City of York Council Housing Allocations Policy.

Officers highlighted that the North Yorkshire Home Choice system was an administrative burden and that York having its own allocations policy allowed for a more local specific policy that met the wider needs of York residents.

Officers stated that a negative to leaving the NYHC partnership was that 'migration' would be more difficult. However, officers stated that

that there was provision for cross-migration and that 'mutual exchange' could also assist with requests of this nature.

In response to a written representation from the British Legion, officers stated that:

- They were mindful of the forces covenant when devising policies.
- 'Reservists' are included within the term 'Armed Forces' with the caveat around injury, illness and disability.
- Any extension to cover all reservists and separated spouses would need further consideration and analysis as this would significantly increase eligibility.
- There was an option for officer discretion in exceptions to the local connection criteria and that cases would be looked at on an individual basis.
- There was a commitment to ongoing staff training, to ensure that staff were able to carry out the policy as intended.

In response to a question from the Executive Member relating to the consultation, officers stated that the policy captured the best elements of the NYHC, including choice based lettings, and it eliminated waste on the housing register. It was noted that having an individual policy for York meant that more Council resources would be freed from helping to administrate and oversee the NYHC.

In response to the second written representation from Mr Steve Galloway, officers explained that there were contingencies to balance the benefits and constraints of the 'good tenant' scheme and that mutual exchanges, management transfers and the direct let process gave residents the opportunity to move, especially in cases of harassment. Officers highlighted that the 'good tenant' scheme had a number of flaws such as having to wait 3 years for qualification and the potential abuse of the system, both of which would not be the case under the new policy.

The Executive Member accepted both written representations on this issue and thanked the residents for their time and effort in making them.

The Executive Member acknowledged the reduction of the bronze waiting list for Housing allocation. Officers explained that this was due to a more transparent approach with residents.

Resolved: That Option 1, to leave the NYHC partnership and adopt the proposed CYC allocations policy, be approved.

Reason: The sub-regional NYHC partnership and allocation policy no longer meets the needs of York. The NYHC is an administrative burden and York wishes to integrate the Choice Based Lettings system with a new Housing IT system.

Cllr H Douglas, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.30 pm].