

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th January 2011

**COUNCIL RESPONSE TO “LOCAL DECISIONS: A FAIRER FUTURE FOR
SOCIAL HOUSING”**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton – Housing, Local Environment and Health
Relevant Head of Service	Liz Tompkin – Head of Housing
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are asked to consider the Council’s response to the consultation document “Local Decisions: A Fairer Future for Social Housing” in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the response to the consultation paper: Local Decisions, A Fairer Future for Social Housing be endorsed.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On the 22nd November the Government published Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing paper. This is a consultation on the future of social housing which sets out its proposals for a fundamental reform of the provision of social housing in England. The proposals are to change legislation governing the way social housing is allocated, how local authorities discharge their main homelessness duty and the types of tenancies granted to social housing tenants.

3.2 Each Local Authority is asked to respond back with their comments by the 17th January 2011. Any changes following the outcome of the consultation will be introduced in the forthcoming Localism Bill.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The proposals are to reform social housing by introducing:

- a) a new flexible local authority affordable rent tenancy with a minimum fixed term of two years;
- b) reforming the social housing allocations system;

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- c) introducing a nationwide social home swap programme;
 - d) enabling local authorities to fully discharge homelessness duties into the private sector;
 - e) addressing overcrowding;
 - f) focusing social housing regulation on economic regulation with a stronger role for local tenants to hold landlords to account for service delivery;
 - g) replacing the HRA with a self financing arrangement;
 - h) produce a duty on Landlords to publish a strategic policy on tenancies.
- 4.2 There are 30 questions in the consultation paper covering the above areas which have been responded to on behalf of the Council in Appendix 1.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will be know in January 2011, this could have a major impact on the finances for housing. It is therefore important that we take the opportunity to use any changes in legislation that will help in using the limited resources of housing stock that the council own.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legislation will be brought in to make changes to the 1985 Housing Act, as amended by the 1996 Housing Act, amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. Under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or acquisition of any disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There will be changes required to the Council's Allocations Policy.

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8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Enterprising Communities – the reform will introduce a more flexible approach to providing social housing.
- 8.2 Safe – the introduction of flexible tenancies will help in managing tenants who do not abide by their tenancy conditions.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

None identified.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

By introducing flexible tenancies this will allow best use of the council's housing stock in the future, freeing up accommodation for those who have a real housing need for social housing.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The allocations policy will cover all areas of equality and diversity through Impact Assessments.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

None identified.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

None identified.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There will be an increased workload for officers with the introduction of more home visits and increased housing advice.

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

This will form part of the proposed changes to the regulation for housing.

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**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF
CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

Flexible tenancies will assist in providing a short term tenancy to ensure tenants abide by their tenancy conditions where anti social behaviour is known.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

None identified.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 The consultation response has been produced through discussions with officers. Further consultation will now take place with tenants through the council's Borough Tenants Forum and Community Forum.

19.2 A briefing has taken place with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No
Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director – Leisure, Environment and Community Services	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No
Head of Service	Yes

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Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

22. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Consultation Response: Local Decisions, a Fairer Future for Housing.

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Communities and Local Government Consultation Document;
CIH Briefing on Social Housing Reform – November 2010.

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