

# WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

## STATEMENT OF DECISION

**SUBJECT: SUPPLY AND ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT  
2016/17**

Notice is hereby given that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development has made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

### Summary of Decision

1. That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development noted the projected supply and proposed allocation of rented housing, as discussed in paragraph 3.1 and set out in Appendices A, B and B1 of the report.

### 2. Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Strategy

#### (i) Tenancy Policy

(a) That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that Non Renewable Flexible Tenancies be renamed Flexible Tenancies for Non Priority Households, and that they may be offered in the following circumstances:

- Where they can help a broader range of low income working households who have few housing opportunities in Westminster to access social housing (the Low Income Workers Tenancies referred to in recommendation 2.3 are being offered in line with this principle)
- Where they are attached to an employment or training support project
- Where they are intended to provide some transitional housing following a bereavement for discretionary successors, under the discretionary succession policy for flexible tenants

Flexible Tenancies for Non Priority Households may also be used in other circumstances subject to agreement by the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing.

(b) That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the Tenancy Policy be amended to set out the general circumstances when a further tenancy may be offered to these households and the length of term to be offered following a review and noted that these circumstances will reflect the policy aim, that in the main they are offered to assist a household for a specific period of time, so that the maximum number of households can benefit from them and that they are not

intended to be a long term housing solution. A further flexible tenancy will normally therefore only be offered where the household's circumstances have changed and is assessed as now having priority for housing under the Councils Housing Allocation Scheme and a private rented tenancy is considered unsuitable for them, as the Council determines they are unable to manage one, or they need a wheelchair adapted property, or they are eligible for Community Supportive Housing (sheltered) and none of the criteria set out in 4.14 of the Tenancy Policy applies.

A further flexible Tenancy offered under the above circumstances will generally be for 5 years but there may be exceptional circumstances (as set out in section 3.7 of the Tenancy Policy) which justify granting a flexible tenancy of less than five years.

Tenants that have been issued with these types of tenancies for non-priority households will not be eligible for Cash to Move payments

- (c) That the that Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Regeneration to agree any changes to the Tenancy Policy related to Flexible Tenancies for Non Priority Households in line with the above circumstances.

#### **(ii) Tenancy Strategy**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the Tenancy Strategy be amended to reflect the requirement of law that all flexible tenancies be subject to a tenancy review, so Non Renewable Flexible Tenancies are now called Flexible Tenancies for Non Priority Households and that they should be subject to a review that the Tenancy Strategy and highlight that registered providers should consider any exceptional circumstances of the household when deciding if these types of tenancies are renewed.

### **3. Affordable Housing for Low Income Working Households**

- (i) That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that a target quota of 10 lettings be established for working households with total gross income of £20k or less who would not otherwise have priority for social housing under the Housing Allocations Scheme and noted that: allocations would be to studio and 1 bed properties, reflecting the relative high level of supply of these size units; and tenancies will generally be for a period of three years (an introductory tenancy followed by a two year Flexible Tenancies for Non Priority Households which will then be reviewed).
- (ii) That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the Housing Allocation Scheme be amended to include the quota and the criteria relating to who is eligible for

these tenancies and how properties will be allocated (as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report).

#### **4. Discretionary Succession**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the Tenancy Policy be amended so that households eligible for a discretionary succession, who have been living in Community Supportive Housing for older people, are required to move to alternative housing, if they are not eligible for the Community Supportive Housing in their own right.

#### **5. Mutual Exchange**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that Tenancy Policy be amended so that mutual exchanges are not agreed where the proposed assignee moving into the Westminster Council property would be under occupying the property as defined by the City Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

#### **6. Workers Points**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the additional points for working households scheme be amended to allow officers to seek formal confirmation that the household is in employment at any point and to remove the additional points if the criteria are not met.

#### **7. Intermediate Housing**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the allocation of future intermediate housing opportunities should be according to household size to avoid under occupancy of intermediate homes and increased priority given to children of existing Council tenants that are overcrowded in their current home and noted that as a result, increased priority will no longer be given to applicants of the former family quota scheme and in addition, existing Westminster Intermediate Tenants will only be given priority when moving to a different type of intermediate housing such as low cost home ownership or one that includes a savings element.

#### **8. Leaseholders in Housing Renewal Areas**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development agreed that the changes as set out in paragraph 5.6 to the Policy for Leaseholders in Housing Renewal Areas (2014) are approved to clarify the Council's offer and to update financial entitlements in line with the statutory framework.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The proposals contained in this report set out the issues related to the development of allocation projections for social housing for 2016/17 to meet the Council's statutory obligations, meet the varying demands for social housing and to reduce the numbers of people living in Temporary Accommodation who are waiting for social housing.

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**Publication Date:** 16 December 2016

**Implementation Date:** 23 December 2016, 5pm

**Reference:** CMfHRBED/2016-2017/14