

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People)

to
Special Cabinet

on
28 March 2017

Report prepared by: Andrew Fiske Group Manager: Housing
Group Manager

Local Lettings Policy – Better Queensway

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Policy and Resources
Executive Councillor: Councillor Flewitt
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

To agree a Local Lettings Policy for Council Tenants on the Queensway Estate which would give them additional priority to move from the Estate, in advance of redevelopment/regeneration, to alternative Council housing provision if they choose to do so.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees to:

- a) Confirm the terms of the Local Lettings Policy for Queensway tenants;
- b) Delegate the timing of the decision to the Deputy Chief Executive for People or Place, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing
- c) Publicise the proposals on the Council's On the Move website;

3. Background

Better Queensway is a major regeneration project and a pioneering development initiative in Southend-on-Sea. It is inevitable that an element of uncertainty around the impact of regeneration will be experienced by tenants on the Queensway Estate; a number of whom will want to move away from the Estate and into alternative Council housing provision ahead of commencement of the major development works. Many of these will be suitably housed in a property which meets their household's requirements as per housing legislation. In such cases, the Council's current Housing Allocation Policy prohibits them from registering for re-housing.

- 3.3 Similarly, Queensway tenants who do have a recognised need to move, as they are over or under occupying their current home, are not attracting sufficient priority to enable them to move elsewhere due to pressure on the housing register (now numbering some 2,000 households).

3.4 Section 167 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires that “every local authority shall have a scheme (their “allocation scheme”) for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation.” Once this has been published the Council has to make all allocations in accordance with that scheme. Councils are able to bring forward Local Lettings Policies (LLP) to specifically address specific situations, which are introduced for a time-limited period to address a particular set of circumstances, and in this case it would be for the initial years of the Better Queensway regeneration project.

3.5 **PROPOSED LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY**

3.6 Any Council Tenant living within the Queensway Estate including the Tower Blocks of Quantock, Malvern, Pennine, Chiltern and the flats on Sutton Road will be able to make an application to join the Council’s Housing Register. If they need help and assistance to make an application then this will be provided.

3.7 For those Queensway tenants that are currently on the Housing Register as they have a recognised need to move, their application will be re-prioritised in accordance with the LLP proposals.

3.8 The Council recognises that redevelopment and regeneration can be a difficult and stressful experience for tenants. Some tenants will be more vulnerable to stress due to frailty, disability, and life circumstances. In view of this, tenants who are eligible for a move to sheltered housing schemes will be given additional priority and support to move. They will be awarded Band B as a minimum and if there are other medical issues that warrant a higher Banding this will be taken into account. Tenants who qualify for sheltered accommodation, who are currently on the Housing Register as Band B, will be moved up to Band A.

3.5.4 All other tenants will be automatically moved up a Band from where they would normally be placed on the Housing Register. Any tenants who are suitably housed and have no housing need to move will be placed in Band C.

3.5.5 Any secure Council tenants who take the opportunity to move from the Queensway Estate in the short term will do so on a permanent basis and as a result will qualify for Home-loss payments and disturbance costs being met in accordance with the Decant Policy. Their existing home will not be let on a permanent basis but will be used as Temporary accommodation for homeless households who would not be entitled to Home-loss payments or disturbance costs.

3.5.6 As the regeneration progresses it may be necessary to provide additional priority to enable tenants to move and this will be triggered 12 months before a specific block is identified for demolition. At that point all tenants affected by the regeneration project who wish to move permanently will be given Band A priority to move during that 12 month period.

4. **Other Options**

The other option would be to include the Local Lettings Policy alongside a wider review of the Allocation Policy but this would take some months to complete. The wider review will take into account this LLP.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

As the Better Queensway is progressing there are a number of tenants who want to leave the Estate but the Council's Allocation Policy does not enable them to do so and the only option would be to introduce a Local Lettings Policy which would enable them to move.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities Safe, Clean, Healthy, Prosperous, Excellent

This new Policy is intended to give a clear statement of the Council's support for any tenants affected by the Better Queensway regeneration. Regeneration projects should ensure that all of the Council's corporate priorities are addressed through the transformation of estates

6.2 Financial Implications

There is the potential of financial implications for each regeneration or redevelopment scheme as a result of this Policy but any such costs will be directly ring fenced to the Better Queensway Project.

6.3 Legal Implications

The Council has a legal duty to comply with the law in relation to the Council's Allocation Policy.

6.4 People Implications

There is the potential of staffing implications arising from this Policy which will be taken into account as part of the capital project costs.

6.5 Property Implications

There are no property implications arising from this Report

6.6 Consultation

There is a need to consult externally on these proposals and this will be done directly by writing to all tenants on the Queensway Estate and via notice placed on the Council's website.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

An Equality impact Assessment will need to be carried out for this policy.

6.8 Risk Assessment

No issues arising from this Report

6.9 Value for Money

No issues arising from this Report.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

No issues arising from this Report.

6.11 Environmental Impact

None arising from this Report

7. Background Papers

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Lettings Policy