

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 April 2016

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 22
MARCH 2016

REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out an extract of the minutes of Cabinet (Housing) Committee held 22 March 2016, with regard to consideration of the outcomes and recommendations of the Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) report (CAB2795(HSG)).

RECOMMENDATION:

That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and make any necessary decisions on the matters contained in the minute extracts.

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1. **OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP (ISG)**

(Report CAB2795(HSG) refers)

Cabinet noted that the Report had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration to enable its contents to be considered without delay.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hiscock introduced the Report as Chairman of the ISG and stated that it had been established by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine the way the Hampshire Home Choice scheme was operating and whether improvements were required. The findings were that the scheme was generally working well, accepting the constraints it operates within (i.e. shortage of available properties) and that applicants believed they were generally treated fairly. There were some issues raised regarding the Local Lettings Policy and Paragraph 5.3 of the Report proposed recommendations to address this.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hiscock for chairing the ISG and for the helpful work produced.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) clarified that the Report would usually have been submitted to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to being considered at this Committee but this had not been possible on this occasion. However, it would be submitted to a future meeting of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

One Member commented that it would be useful to include the membership of the ISG within the Report. The Assistant Director confirmed this could be included when the Report was considered by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee. *NB Subsequent to the meeting, the membership of the ISG was confirmed as follows:*

*Councillors: Hiscock (Chairman), Bodtger, Gosling, Humby, Scott & Warwick
Officers: Richard Botham, Amber Russell, Olu Fajuyitan and Elizabeth Wallington (Hampshire Home Choice Project Coordinator)*

In response to questions, the Assistant Director advised that statistics on waiting time for properties for applicants in each Band were available and in

general, it depended on the type of property being applied for. One of the ISG recommendations was that this information was provided for applicants to assist their choice. Councillor Hiscock explained that the qualifications for each Banding level had not changed – there were more applicants within Band 2 due to external factors which consequently increased the waiting times.

In response to further questions, the Assistant Director advised that the Barton Farm Community Lettings Plan had not been specifically discussed but that there were no changes to the Plan previously agreed. Any new proposals for such Plans could be assessed under the proposals suggested in Paragraph 5.3 of the Report. Having a Local Lettings Plan in place did not exclude an applicant in high housing need who did not live in the area.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the outcome of the ISG review and its conclusion that the existing sub regional scheme of allocations and local City Council variations remain “fit for purpose”, be noted.
2. That the existing policy relating to the application of Community Lettings Plans be amended, as set out in paragraph 5.3 and 5.4 of the report.
3. That a Member Briefing on Hampshire Home Choice and the Allocations Framework be delivered in Summer/Autumn 2016.
4. That officers facilitate a continuous programme of raising awareness on the Allocations Framework and matters relating to Housing Allocations for applicants of Hampshire Home Choice and the wider general public.