



MyHomeChoice task group Minutes

The minutes of the MyHomeChoice task group meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Wednesday, 25 July 2018 in committee room 2, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

MyHomeChoice task group members present:

Councillors Howard Ballard, John Hodgkinson, Andrea Kay, Patsy Ormrod, Ron Shewan, Ann Turner and Val Wilson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Emma Ellison

Other councillors present:

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder

Officers present:

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

David McArthur, Private Sector Housing and Housing Options Manager

Pamela Holroyd, Housing Options Team Leader

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

1 Election of Chair

Councillor Howard Ballard was elected as Chair of the task group.

2 Election of Vice Chair

Councillor Ann Turner was elected as Vice Chair of the task group.

3 Declarations of interest

None.

The context of the review

The Private Sector Housing and Housing Options Manager, Dave McArthur, introduced the report summarising the consultation responses to the proposed changes to the arrangements for the allocation and letting of social housing in Wyre via the My Home Choice Fylde Coast scheme. A report detailing the responses had been circulated previously.

There had been some problems with the current system of allocating properties and the intention was to make it easier to understand and to deliver. It was also the intention of the Housing Associations to take steps to eliminate the stigma of social housing.

The consultation took place between 8 November 2017 and 18 December 2018 and was publicised through:

- Fylde Coast local authority websites
- Mailshots to key stakeholders and registered applicants to the MyHomeChoice scheme (approx. 4600)
- Fylde Coast local authority offices
- Press Release
- MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast website

258 responses were received.

The point was made that the percentage of social housing allocated on a first come first served basis was 33%, which appeared high. Mr McArthur confirmed that this figure simply reflected what happened at present and the new system would ensure that at least 50% would be allocated to those with a housing need. That figure would be closely monitored.

Mr McArthur confirmed that the current income and savings thresholds would remain, although he acknowledged that different Local Authorities had different thresholds. Cllr Berry added that if it was intended to broaden the offer of social housing in order to promote balanced, mixed communities.

It was not proposed to set aside properties for people moving into the area for work; the agreed criteria would be applied in such cases.

In response to a question Mr McArthur confirmed that Regenda would provide assistance with the online allocation process, where necessary, for people who did not have the requisite digital skills. Cllr Berry added that libraries and the Fleetwood Market Digital Hub provided other facilities that could be used, with the support of the staff if necessary. It was also intended to make the application process simpler and more accessible so that no one would be disadvantaged.

Cllr Berry advised the task group that the council had an excellent relationship with Regenda, who were the main provider. There were regular liaison

meetings between the council and Regenda, who were investing significantly in renovations and upgrades to properties.

The task group welcomed having had the opportunity to question and comment on the proposals. They were in agreement with the suggested changes to the allocation process and asked that their views be reported to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

It was agreed:

- (i) That the proposed changes to the arrangements for the allocation and letting of social housing in Wyre via My Home Choice Fylde be supported.
- (ii) That the task group's views be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity.
- (iii) That the task group's views be reported to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.
- (iv) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a report on the implementation of the revised allocation and letting arrangements once they have been in place for 12 months (September 2019).

5 Scoping document

In the light of the decisions taken by the task group under the previous item, as detailed in minute 4, no further discussion took place about the draft scoping document.

6 Public involvement

In the light of the decisions previously taken by the task group, as detailed in minute 4, no further discussion took place about this agenda item.

7 Next steps

The task group agreed to submit their views to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.54 pm.

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