



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 19
OCTOBER 2021**

SUBJECT: LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN 2022 – 2027

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Committee with a Local Lettings Plan for approval prior to consultation with stakeholders.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the allocation and letting of houses and homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) considers and approves the Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027 as set out in Section 4 and APPENDIX I;**
- (ii) agrees that a consultation exercise on the revised Local Lettings Plan is undertaken with key stakeholders as set out in Section 5; and**
- (iii) agrees that following the consultation exercise a further report will be presented to the Housing and Community Safety Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Access to social housing is governed by legislation and guidance. Although housing legislation requires landlords to give reasonable preference to certain groups when allocating their houses, they can also take other factors into account. Legislation provides landlords with the discretion to operate a separate lettings process from their Allocations Policy for different parts of their housing stock. A Local Letting Plan can be a useful way of taking specific local factors into account, including the allocation of new build housing.

- 3.2 On 25 October 2011, the Communities Committee agreed the first Lettings Plan for Council new build housing (paragraph 12 of the Minute refers). This set out specific objectives including making best use of housing stock and creating sustainable communities and clarified that the allocations quotas agreed by the Committee would not specifically apply to the properties covered within the Plan.
- 3.3 There have been several Local Lettings Plans since 2011, with each Plan revised to reflect delivery of the new build housing programme. Every Plan has upheld the common aim of making the best use of housing stock whilst creating sustainable communities in new build developments.
- 3.4 On 3 February 2015, the Communities Committee agreed the Lettings Plan 2015 – 2018 and that the duration of the Lettings Plan should be the same period as the respective Local Housing Strategy (LHS) that delivers each new build programme and it should be reviewed as part of the next LHS (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 3.5 The Local Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024 was approved by Communities Committee on 2 April 2019 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers). The LHS Action Plan includes an action under Priority 1 to “review Moray Council’s New Build Lettings Initiative” during 2019/20. This action has been delayed until this point due to the need to prioritise COVID-19 related activity.

4. LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN 2022 – 2027

- 4.1 A Local Lettings Plan is provided as **APPENDIX I**. It operates alongside the Council’s Allocations Policy but provides an additional set of rules, which will be applied in order to achieve its outcome of creating sustainable new communities.
- 4.2 The plan will operate for the initial let of all council new build properties in Moray, expected over the period 2022 – 2027. Progress on the Moray affordable housing programme is reported regularly to Elected Members, most recently to Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on 8 June 2021 (paragraph 17 of the Minute refers).
- 4.3 In allocating new build properties, the Council will not apply the annually agreed allocations quotas to the new build developments but will seek to allocate new build council properties in such a way that achieves the stated objectives of the Plan.
- 4.4 The Council will regard the applicants’ top three areas of preference (as stated in their housing application) as the primary factor rather than the number of points awarded under the Allocations Policy. Certain exclusions will apply where an applicant (or member of their household) is considered to pose a risk to the local lettings plan aims and objectives.
- 4.5 A Local Lettings Plan Panel will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the operation of the Local Lettings Plan. Decisions made by the

Panel will be clear, proportionate and accountable and an audit trail will be maintained.

- 4.6 The operation of the Local Lettings Plan will be reported annually to the Housing and Community Safety Committee as part of the Allocations Policy Annual Performance Report.
- 4.7 The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed as part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029.
- 4.8 The Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027 will be published on the Moray Council website.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Landlords are expected to consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders when developing a local lettings plan. Therefore, if the Committee agrees the Local Lettings Plan it is proposed to have a period of public consultation from 20 October 2021 to 26 November 2021. This consultation will include:

- the publication of the Local Lettings Plan along with an online survey which will be publicised via the Council website and social media;
- contacting a random sample of applicants on the housing list to request feedback;
- contacting a random sample of tenants to request feedback; and
- requesting feedback from:
 - the Moray Tenants' Forum;
 - the register of interested tenants; and
 - Community Councils and other relevant stakeholders.

6. FUTURE ACTIONS

- 6.1 A further progress report with the outcome of the consultation process, along with a final Local Lettings Plan, will be presented to this Committee on 8 February 2022.
- 6.2 Subject to the consultation feedback and Committee's approval in February 2022, supporting operational procedures will be developed and implemented to support the plan and staff.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Corporate Plan and the Moray 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) identify the need to provide high quality affordable housing. The Local Letting Plan seeks to make the best use of the Council's housing stock and create sustainable communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

The legislative framework for the Council's Allocations Policy is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 197, as amended. In addition, the Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes expected in relation to access to housing.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The Local Lettings Plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which will be undertaken during the consultation period.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property Services, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Strategy and Development Manager and Officers within the Housing Service, Legal Services Manager, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), the Equal Opportunities Officer and Lindsey Robinson (Committee Services Officer). Any comments have been incorporated into the report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This report provides the Housing and Community Safety Committee with a Local Lettings Plan for approval prior to consultation with stakeholders. A further report on the consultation outcomes will be presented to this Committee in February 2022.

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Background Papers: With author
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