

**REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE – 30 AUGUST 2011****INTERIM REPORT ON STRATEGIC REVIEW OF HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY****1. Recommendations****1.1 To agree in principle to amend the Housing Allocation Policy as follows:**

- i) reduce the number of reasonable offers from two to one offer for all applicants**
- ii) reduce the suspension period for refusal of a reasonable offer from 12 months to 6 months**
- iii) introduce a suspension period of 12 months for eviction for anti-social behaviour or for using the house or allowing the house to be used for immoral or illegal purposes or an offence punishable by imprisonment committed in, or in the locality of the house**
- iv) combine existing letting areas into larger areas which have a minimum number of properties per size and informed by turnover rates**  
  
**and subject to approval of the above, to**
- v) reduce the minimum number of areas required to be selected by applicants from five to two**
- vi) combine the current letting areas of Buchanhaven, Clerkhill, Middle Grange and Town Centre in Peterhead into one area**
- vii) combine the letting areas of Stonehaven, Fetteresso, Cowie and Ury into one area**

**2. Background/Discussion**

- 2.1** The Social Work & Housing Committee meeting of the 2 June 2011 considered an interim report on a full review of the Housing Allocation Policy instructed by a previous meeting of the Committee. The full review of the policy is continuing to be progressed and it is expected a further report on the full review will come back to the Committee next year, setting out further proposals and confirming the consultation process. The interim report reflects the current need to make essential short term adjustments to the Allocation Policy to ensure we make the best use of our housing stock.
- 2.2** The Committee noted the recommendations of the report 1.1(i) to (vi) and

agreed to recommendation 1.1(vii) and to consultation on the interim proposals with the Area Committees and all other stakeholders and that a report be brought back to the November meeting of the SW&H Committee with feedback from the consultation and to include final recommendations.

- 2.3 The Allocations Review Group and the Housing Management Team have considered a number of Allocation Policy interim measures in order to make the best use of affordable housing in Aberdeenshire, by reducing the level of void periods, simplifying access and improving equity. These measures include reviewing the allocation areas by combining these into larger areas that have a minimum number of properties in each area and is informed by turnover rates per property size.
- 2.4 The initial analysis of allocation areas indicates that the current allocation settlements within each of the housing management areas can be amalgamated into between 7 and 10 larger letting areas. This will in turn allow a reduction in the minimum number of areas that applicants must select from five areas to two. Also, it would facilitate much greater flexibility in allocating houses and increase opportunities to make offers to individual applicants. The draft amalgamation of existing allocation areas are detailed at Appendix 1.
- 2.5 It is proposed to rationalise the allocation areas in Peterhead and Stonehaven. Combining the letting areas of Buchanhaven, Clerkhill, Middle Grange and Towncentre into one area of Peterhead will remove the existing Peterhead anomaly and will harmonise these areas with the Council's Common Housing Register partners. Likewise it is proposed to combine the letting areas of Fetteresso, Cowie and Ury with Stonehaven.
- 2.6 The Allocation Policy would also be amended by reducing the number of reasonable housing offers from two, to one, and by reducing the suspension period for refusal to 6 months, from 12 months. Moving to one offer would be expected to reduce void relet times, reduce refusal rates and the number of offers made per relet and also to reduce time in homeless temporary accommodation. It is anticipated however that there will be an increase in the number of appeals against reasonable offer.
- 2.7 A new provision would be introduced which will permit suspension from allocation offers in cases of eviction for antisocial behaviour or for using the house or allowing the house to be used for immoral or illegal purposes or an offence punishable by imprisonment committed in, or in the locality of the house. This will avoid a potential situation of having to rehouse an evicted tenant immediately after eviction because of their priority housing need.

### **3. Area and Policy Implications**

- 3.1 The changes will have area and policy implications and will require consultation with tenant groups, applicants, partner organisations and members.

### **4. Staffing and Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no staffing implications and the financial implication in terms of Apply4Homes and Northgate have still to be quantified. These will be reported when the report comes back to the Social Work and Housing Committee for final consideration.

**5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development have been consulted and agree with the content of this report.

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MARR AREAS	Housing Stock						Total
	1Apt	2Apt	3Apt	4Apt	5+Apt	Sheltered	
<b>Upper Deeside</b>							
Aboyne, Braemar, Birse, Crathie Ballater, Kincardine O`Neil Logie Coldstone, Tarland	0	168	91	63	6	52	380
<b>Lower Deeside</b>							
Banchory, Crathes, Inchmarlo, Lumphanan, Torphins, Strachan	0	168	150	63	2	0	383
<b>Huntly Town</b>	0	184	168	93	12	113	570
<b>Huntly Rural</b>							
Cairnie, Clatt, Drumblade, Forgue Glass, Gartly, Ittingstone, Largue, Kennethmont, Lumsden, Ruthven Rhynie	0	54	61	37	0	0	152

MARR AREAS	Housing Stock						
<b>Alford</b> Alford, Glenkindie, Keig, Montgarrie Monymusk, Muir of Fowlis, Strathdon	0	77	40	37	0	66	220

KINCARDINE & MEARN'S AREAS	Housing Stock						
<b>Mearns Area</b> Auchenblae, Drumlithie, Fettercairn, Fordoun, Glasslaw, Glenbervie, Laurencekirk, Luthermuir	0	83	73	77	4	41	278
<b>Stonehaven &amp; Coast</b> Arbuthnott, Barras, Catterline, Cowie Fetteresso, Garvock, Gourdon, Inverbervie, Johnshaven, Kineff, Marykirk, Stonehaven, St Cyrus Tewel, Ury	0	341	383	195	34	21	974
<b>North Kincardine</b> Drumoak, Durriss, Maryculter, Muchalls Newtonhill, Portlethen	0	65	88	49	13	66	281
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>3238</b>

GARIOCH & FORMARTINE AREAS	Housing Stock						Total
	1Apt	2Apt	3Apt	4Apt	5+Apt	Sheltered	
Balmedie / Blackdog / Potterton	0	10	21	18	0	34	83
Blackburn Westhill / Echt / Lyne of Skene / Kirkton of Skene / Midmar	0	41	49	25	0	67	182
Ellon / Auchedly / Berefold / Cairnhill / Collieston / Foveran / Kinharrachie / Newburgh / Tipperty / Methlick	0	171	131	90	1	86	479
Fyvie / Auchterless / Rothienorman / Meikle Wartle	0	56	49	27	0	27	159
Insch / Auchleven / Colpy / Leslie / Old Rayne / Oyne	1	98	59	43	1	0	202
Inverurie / Daviot / Pitcapple	2	207	307	149	1	248	914
Kemnay / Millbank / Kintore / Leylodge	0	145	145	130	1	87	508
Newmachar / Blair of Fintry / Hatton of Fintry	0	28	16	11	0	33	88
Oldmeldrum / Barravale / Pitmedden / Tarves / Udney Green / Udney Station	0	117	112	48	4	49	330

<b>GARIOCH &amp; FORMARTINE AREAS</b>	Housing Stock						
Turriff / Cuminestown	0	113	157	88	3	124	485
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>3430</b>

BANFF & BUCHAN AREAS	Housing Stock						Total
	1Apt	2Apt	3Apt	4Apt	5+Apt	Sheltered	
Aberchider and Bridge of Marnoch	0	55	90	35	1	16	197
Banff/Macduff/Whitehills and Country Cottages Close to Banff	0	265	571	246	10	21	1113
Portsoy, Sandend, Cornhill, Foryce, Durnview Cottages, Birkenbog Cottages	0	40	114	70	5	36	265
Gardenstown/New Byth	0	22	22	3	0	16	63
Fraserburgh	4	226	822	247	22	158	1479
Cairnbulg, Inverallochy and Lonmay	0	19	50	24	0	17	110
Tyrie, Rosehearty, Sandhaven, New Aberdour	0	79	157	84	0	35	355
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>1826</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>3582</b>

BUCHAN AREAS	Housing Stock						Total
	1Apt	2Apt	3Apt	4Apt	5+Apt	Sheltered	
Peterhead and Boddam	371	870	290	11	1	57	1600
St Combs	16	33	4	0	0	0	53
New Leeds, Strichen and New Pitsligo	57	85	67	1	0	34	244
Mintlaw, Old Deer, Fetterangus and Clola	77	82	87	2	0	0	248
Stuartfield	19	17	23	0	0	17	76
Longside	20	16	2	0	1	17	56
Auchnagatt, Maud, New Deer and Knaven	51	27	17	0	0	16	111
Hatton	38	43	17	0	0	0	98
Cruden Bay and Longhaven	35	42	32	1	0	22	132
Crimond and St Fergus	57	80	39	0	0	29	205
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>1295</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>2823</b>