

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

A meeting of the Executive Member Adult Social Care was held on Monday 9 June 2025.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Rostron (Chair),

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillors

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

**OFFICERS:** L Grabham and C Lunn

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors

25/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

25/2 **LETTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING - POLICY UPDATE**

The Executive Member for Adult Social Care considered a report regarding the Letting Affordable Housing - Policy Update.

The purpose of the report was to provide context and outline the proposed changes to the Common Allocation Policy (CAP), a copy of which was shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

The proposal supported the ambitions of 'A Successful and Ambitious Town' by ensuring that the allocation of social housing met the demand of those in housing need.

Due to rising demand for social/affordable rented housing, it was essential that the CAP remained relevant, adhered to national policy and, vitally, met Middlesbrough's local housing needs. The Partnership had recently undertaken a review of the current CAP to ensure it had a policy that was fair, clear and helped those who needed social/affordable housing most. The review was informed by consultation with applicants registered on Tees Valley Home Finder, key partners and stakeholders.

Middlesbrough Council was a member of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership and collectively operated a CAP, housing register and digital lettings platform – Tees Valley Home Finder. Tees Valley Home Finder was an online web portal allowing those seeking accommodation in the partner boroughs to register and 'bid' for housing. The two Registered Provider Partnership members, Beyond Housing and North Star, advertised/let their properties through this route. A further 12 Registered Providers were signatories to a Nomination Agreement. These Registered Providers advertised/let a minimum of 50% of their vacant rented properties via the Tees Valley Home Finder platform.

There was high demand for social/affordable rented housing and availability did not match this demand. This was the reason a review of the policy had been undertaken, with the aim of maximising the Council's ability to best address local and prioritised housing need:

Housing Register

The number of applicants on the Housing register for Middlesbrough at the end of Quarter Four 2024/25 was 2878.

Average Number of Properties Advertised as Available for Letting

Whilst the weekly number of properties did fluctuate, between April 2024 to the end of Quarter Four 2024-25, the average number of advertised properties per week was 14 in

Middlesbrough.

In addition to the issues of demand, the policy review took place to also ensure that the Council was in a good position to assist those in the greatest housing need and reflect on customer feedback. It also gave the opportunity to address another driver for the review of the CAP, which was to ensure compliance regarding changes in national policy, including the Government's commitment to ensure appropriate priority and support was given to Armed Forces Communities including veterans, those who were young care leavers, and those who had experienced domestic abuse.

Representatives of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership undertook a review and identified several potential changes which the consultation exercise subsequently sought views on. Pages 17-30 of the CAP Consultation Report (Appendix 2) detailed the consultation questions asked, and sought views on 12 proposed changes (Appendix 1).

The consultation exercise for the proposed changes ran for six weeks between 7 October 2024 - 18 November 2024. In total, 682 consultation responses were received. The vast majority (597) were from residents living within the Tees Valley Housing Partnership areas; page four of Appendix 2 provided a breakdown of consultation replies.

As detailed in Appendix 2, all consultation proposals were supported by the majority of those who responded. Analysis of consultation replies (both the questions and open narrative replies) had led to no further changes to the proposed policy, other than those consulted on.

The Executive Member noted that all applicants with a live application at the date the new CAP was introduced would not have a banding reduced: the banding would remain for the period the application was live and there was no change in the applicants' circumstances. However, there may be instances where current live applicants may potentially secure a higher banding, i.e. for acute over-crowding/young people leaving care. Work was ongoing to identify these potential applicants to ensure their banding was revised to as close as possible to the new CAP implementation date. All new applicants made after the date the new CAP was formally implemented would be banded according to the new assessment criteria.

## **OPTIONS**

The alternative of Middlesbrough ceasing to be part of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership had been considered but discounted. There were benefits to having a consistent approach across the Tees Valley as, often, applicants moved between local authority areas. Additionally, in terms of the support costs of managing a choice based lettings service, the current arrangement was more cost efficient to the Council.

An alternative to the suggested changes would be to continue to operate allocation of social housing via the current CAP, which had been in place since 2019 and not reflective of current needs and demand.

Following consultation this had proven to not be fit for purpose and proposed changes had been generally well received.

It was noted that this new policy had been given approval as necessary by all other partners in the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership, including Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

The Executive Member noted the implementation date of 11 July 2025 and commented on the promptness of the intended delivery.

## **ORDERED that:**

- 1. The proposed changes to the CAP be approved.**
- 2. That the recent consultation exercise, which was undertaken to inform an updated Tees Valley CAP and approve the proposed new CAP, be noted.**

## REASONS

By approving the amendments this would:

- Help the Council to ensure consistency of the policy across the sub region.
- Give clarity and transparency for all scheme applicants across the partnership.
- Ensure that the policy was aligned with statute which had emerged since the previous policy was implemented.
- Ensure that the policy was reflective of stakeholder feedback provided during the consultation process.

Although Middlesbrough Council was not a stock holding authority, it was required to operate a housing register along with an allocation Policy. In partnership with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Beyond Housing and North Star (known as the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership (TVLP)), Middlesbrough Council operated a CAP. The Partnership was committed to working collaboratively to ensure a fair and transparent CAP. The recent CAP review was undertaken to ensure that the housing needs of residents across the boroughs of Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees were met.

25/3

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

None.

**The decision will come into force after five working days following the day the decision was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.**