

1 May 2020



BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

OFFICER DECISIONS NOTICE

OFFICER DECISIONS MADE UNDER THE SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - HOUSING – BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

The following decision (s) have been taken by Officer Delegation and will come into effect on 1 May 2020 unless the decision is a key decision and the call-in procedure is activated.

Officer Delegated Decision made on 1 May 2020

Decision

To implement an amended Local Lettings Plan Policy for the allocation and letting of rented social housing in Babergh/Braintree/Colchester/East Suffolk/Ipswich/Maldon/Mid Suffolk for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, setting out how the Council will let properties from May 2020 until Government advice changes.

Key Decision: No

Subject to Call In: No

Reason for Decision

- 1.1. The Partner Organisations (POs) in the 'Gateway to Homechoice' scheme are Local Authorities (LAs) or agents working on behalf of LAs that are exercising legal duties towards homeless households.
- 1.2. When the Government announced restrictions on movement to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, it also sent out guidance to LAs telling them to take action to make sure that no-one is forced to sleep rough.
- 1.3. At the same time, the POs are trying to work with people who are being discharged from hospital, displaced from temporary and/or supported housing schemes that cannot manage during the pandemic.
- 1.4. Some people approaching the LA may have symptoms themselves or be trying to

self-isolate because they are in an NHS protected group.

1.5.LAs are also dealing with people where they are unable to remain in their accommodation because of a breakdown in their relationship with their family. This is sometimes as a result of domestic abuse.

1.6.While restrictions on movement and recommendations for social distancing continue, fewer properties become available and the landlords of the properties have to manage the process of void inspection and works, in a way that is safe for their staff and for the public.

1.7.The Partner Organisations therefore recognise that this is a time of extraordinary pressures that has not been experienced before.

1.8.At the beginning of the pandemic, choice-based lettings were temporarily suspended in order to comply with Government guidance on social distancing. In particular:

- Landlords using the scheme stopped or dramatically reduced work to make properties ready to let as this could not be undertaken safely on a routine basis.**
- Housing organisations were concerned for the safety of staff and members of the public when viewing and signing up to properties.**
- Completing a move during a period of lock-down could be difficult due to support services (such as removals) being unavailable.**

1.9.On 27th April 2020, the Government published new guidance for social landlords on essential moves. This Policy takes that guidance into account.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None

Any Declarations of Interest Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None