

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 5 March 2014)

1. INTRODUCTION OF “INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES” (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 69)

The Cabinet has agreed that the Council should start using “introductory tenancies” for new tenants who are being allocated Council housing from the housing waiting list. Introductory tenancies allow the tenancy to be pro-actively managed in the early stages, with a view to educating and supporting the new tenants so that they are successful in sustaining the tenancy. This form of tenancy also makes it easier for the Council to regain possession of the property, as a measure of last resort, if there are persistent, unresolved problems with, for example, anti-social behaviour or rent arrears. The introductory tenancy automatically becomes a fixed term tenancy after 12 months, unless the introductory period is formally extended for a further 6 months trial period, or the Council has regained possession of the property.

Unlike secure tenancies, which are currently offered to new tenants from the outset, the process for gaining possession of the property is much simpler. The Council serves a Notice Requiring Possession, rather than making application to the Courts. The tenant has the right to appeal against the Notice Requiring Possession and also against a Notice extending the period of the Introductory Tenancy. The appeal may be through written representations or through a hearing. In either case, the appeal must be determined by senior housing officers that were not involved in the original decision. The officers have been given the necessary delegated powers to allow them to operate the introductory tenancies and to conduct the appeals promptly and fairly.

The new arrangements come into operation on 1 April 2014.

2. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 70)

Together with other electoral registration authorities, the Council has been required to undertake a review of its polling districts and polling places earlier than had been originally anticipated. The General Purposes and Licensing Committee established a working party to oversee the review and a more detailed report appears in the report of that Committee, dated 7 March 2014, elsewhere on this agenda.

The Cabinet is responsible for the designation of polling places, the geographical area in which a polling station is situated. By law, a polling station (the building where polling takes place) must be within a polling district (a geographical subdivision of an electoral area, such as a parliamentary constituency or a district ward) and within a polling place, unless special circumstances apply. To allow the Returning Officer flexibility to use the most suitable available premises as polling stations the Cabinet has agreed to continue with the previous practice of designating the whole of each polling district as the polling place. The full list of the proposed polling places was approved by the Cabinet.

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**