

**Nomination Agreement – Midlothian Women's Aid****Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Director, Health and Social Care****1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek elected member's agreement to introduce a Nomination Agreement with Midlothian Women's Aid to provide accommodation on an annual basis.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Midlothian Council has a statutory responsibility to anyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness, including households experiencing domestic violence. The Council's Housing Allocation Policy current target is to let 45% of all Council lets to homeless waiting list applicants and an analysis of lettings outcomes demonstrates that is being achieved.
- 2.2 Domestic violence is a significant cause of homelessness in Midlothian, representing 18% of all homeless presentations each year (75 households).
- 2.3 It is proposed 2 Midlothian Council properties would be allocated each year to households experiencing domestic violence, who will then be supported in that property by Midlothian Women's Aid. This is in addition to the local authorities obligations to applicant's presenting as victims of domestic abuse. The proposal will increase housing options for those households experiencing homelessness as a consequence of domestic violence.
- 2.4 If agreed, a Nomination Agreement will be developed with Midlothian Women's Aid and the relevant rental charge for the properties provided will be liable in full.
- 2.5 Midlothian Council and Midlothian Women's Aid will monitor and meet to review the operation of this agreement annually.

**3 Report Implications****3.1 Resource**

- 3.1.1 There is no direct financial cost to Midlothian Council, other than staff time required to develop, monitor and review the Nomination Agreement.

Midlothian Council lets approximately 500 properties per annum. The proposed Nomination Agreement would not significantly deplete this resource.

### 3.2 Risk

There are no significant identifiable risk associated with this project. Similar nomination arrangements have operated successfully with the local Housing Associations for a number of years.

Midlothian Council will ensure the properties subject to the proposed Nomination Agreement will be allocated on a sensitive basis.

### 3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

### 3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

It will support the Council's Local Housing Strategy Outcomes (2013-2017) and East and Midlothian Council Violence Against Women Strategy:

- Households have improved housing options across all tenures.
- Homeless households and those threatened with homelessness are able to access support and advice services.

### 3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Continuing to take measures to increase the supply of affordable housing in Midlothian addresses the problem of large numbers of households in Midlothian living in housing need and also prevents an increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless households experiencing domestic violence, which is unsuitable and expensive.

### 3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Discussions have been held with Midlothian Women's Aid and Midlothian Council Homelessness and Allocation service.

### 3.7 Ensuring Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to take account of the needs of equality groups in relation to homelessness.

### 3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Significant numbers of households living in housing need impacts negatively on the community, therefore increasing housing options will ensure the well-being of, and provide a better quality of life for people living in Midlothian experiencing domestic violence and will also ensure that Midlothian remains an attractive place of choice for living and working.

**3.9 IT Issues**

None

**4 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Agrees to introduce a Nomination Agreement with Midlothian Women's Aid, which will comply with legally required Heads of Terms.

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014

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