



**REPORT TO CUSTOMER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 13 SEPTEMBER  
2017**

**1.0 SUBJECT: Consultation Report : Allocations Policy Review 2017**

**2.0 PURPOSE :**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the outcome of a series of measures taken to meet the Association's obligations to consult tenants and other relevant stakeholders in the review of the Housing Allocation Policy as set out in the Tenant Participation Strategy and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the consultation measures as set out below
- Approve the publication of this report on the Association's website and
- Publish a summary in the Autumn 2017 newsletter
- Receive a report at the October meeting, recommending changes in the Association's Allocations Policy

**4.0 BACKGROUND**

**4.1** At their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 the Customer Services Committee approved a report setting out issues on which it was proposed to review the Allocations Policy to comply with the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

**4.2** The Statutory Guidance issued by the Scottish Government in respect of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (Legal Framework for Housing Allocations) states

*Landlords have a duty to consult on and set out how they will prioritise the allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges and to publish these rules in an allocation policy. Landlords are required to consult the following groups before making or altering their allocation policies:*

- *applicants on the housing list;*
- *their tenants;*
- *registered tenant organisations;*
- *such other persons as landlords see fit.*

- 4.3 In addition, the Act requires that Landlords should prepare and publish a report on the consultation on its allocation policy. It states that social landlords may publish the report on the consultation in any such manner as it thinks fit.
- 4.4 The Association's Customer Services Departmental Management Plan 2016-17 states, at Appendix 11 that:

*Prior to carrying out any resident consultation, the following should be set out:*

- *Which Services users are to be consulted?*
- *How they are to be consulted*
- *What time should be allowed for consultation?*
- *What reminders should be issued during the consultation period?*
- *The minimum level of response that will consider being representative*
- *The minimum level of support that would be considered to be a mandate for action*
- *What action will be taken if the minimum level of response is not reached?*
- *How the results will be report to decision making Committees*
- *How the results will be reported to residents*

## **5.0 MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 General Consultation**

Advice about the consultation, and how to participate in the consultation, featured on the Association's website (in the Current Consolations section of the Tenant Zone) on the Facebook page and on our foyer display from 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017

### **5.2 Consulting Applicants**

There were currently 2214 applicants on the Homehunt Register who have expressed an interest in housing by Ochil View. Each applicant who has provided an email address was sent a link to the online survey. Each applicant that has not provided an email was written to and invited to take part in the survey.

### **5.3 Consulting tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations**

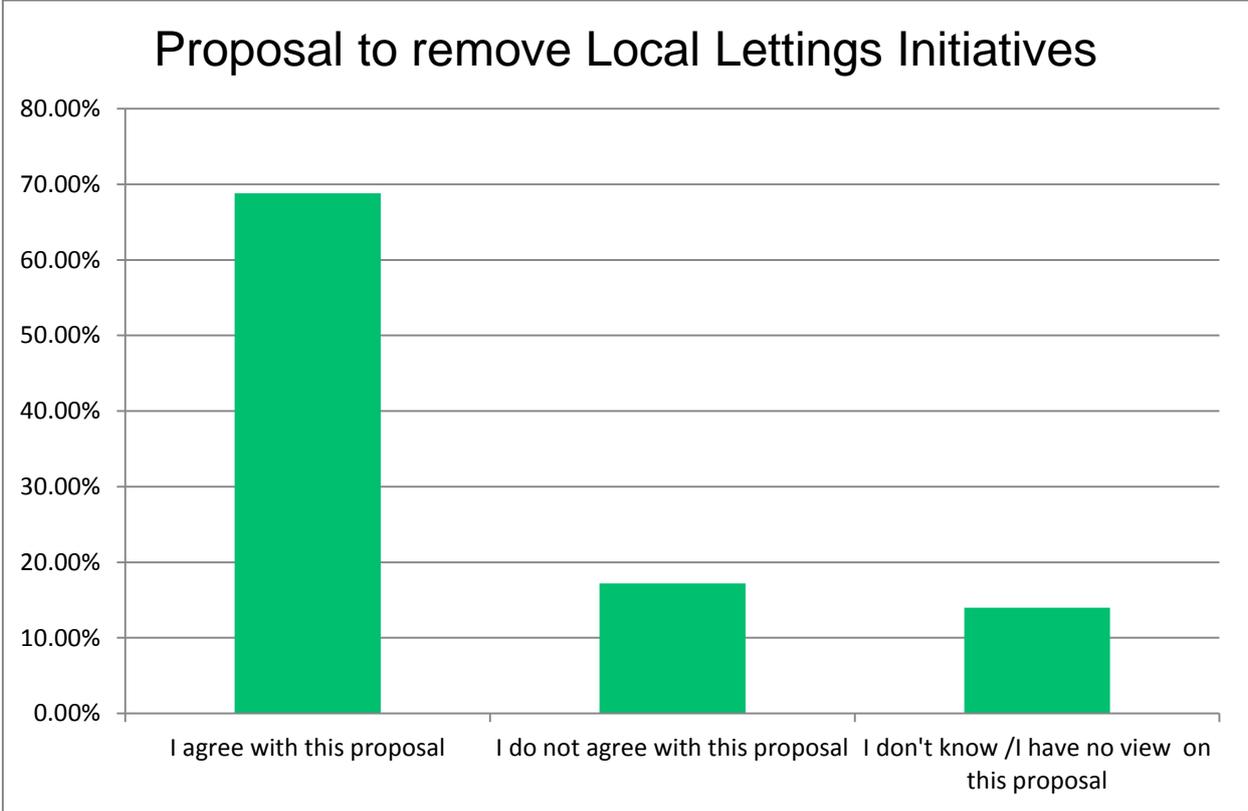
Ochil View currently has 1370 tenants who must be consulted. There was an article in the June 2017 newsletter which invited tenants to complete an online survey or ask for a paper questionnaire to be sent. During the consultation period, visitors to the office were asked to complete a questionnaire.

The July meeting of the Involved Resident's Group focussed on the consultation on the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy.

All letters issued to tenants during the consultation period included a prompt card and these cards were available in the Association's office during the consultation period

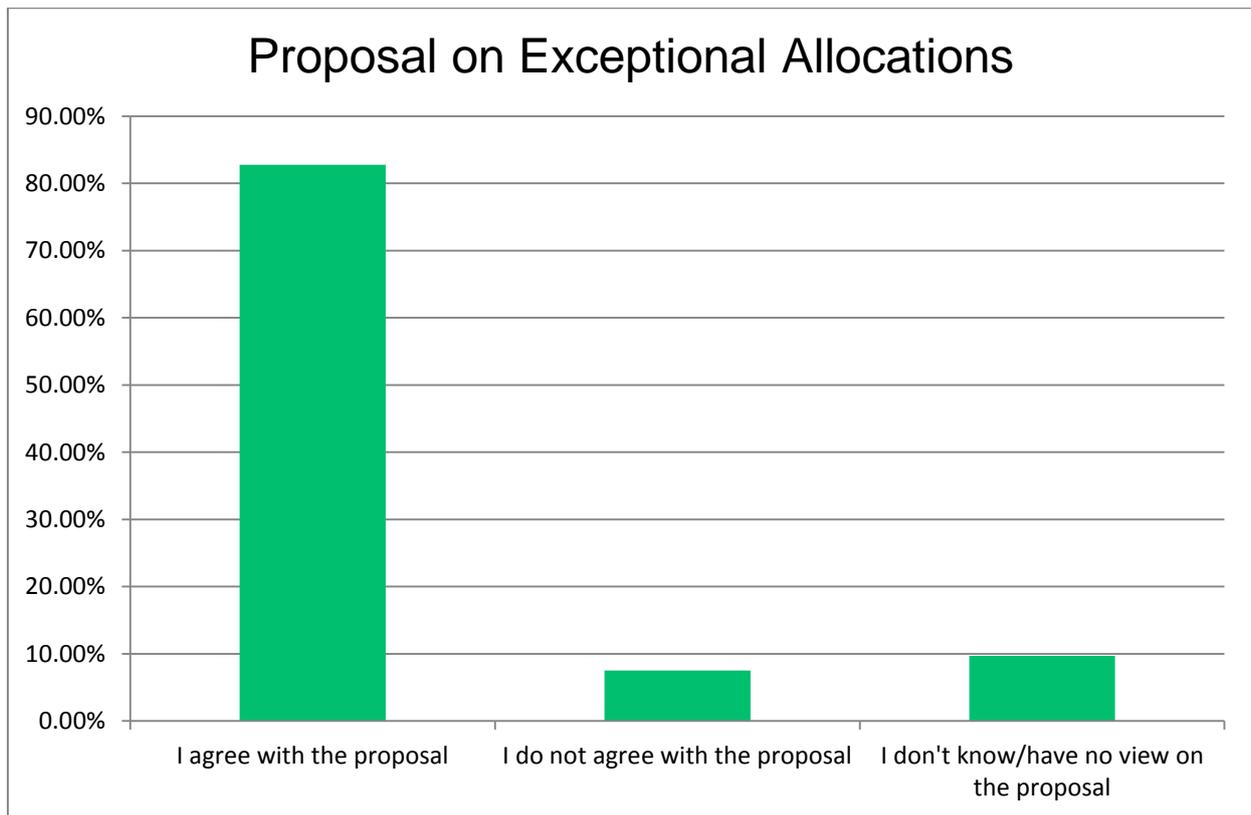
**5.4** Tenants, applicants and RTO's were consulted on a proposal to remove Local Lettings Initiatives from the Housing Allocation Policy. 93 responses were received.

**5.5** The proposal was supported by 68.8% to 17.2% to remove Local Letting Initiatives from the Allocations Policy. Removing the respondents who answered "don't know", which were 13.9% of all respondents makes a 4:1 majority in favour of the proposal.



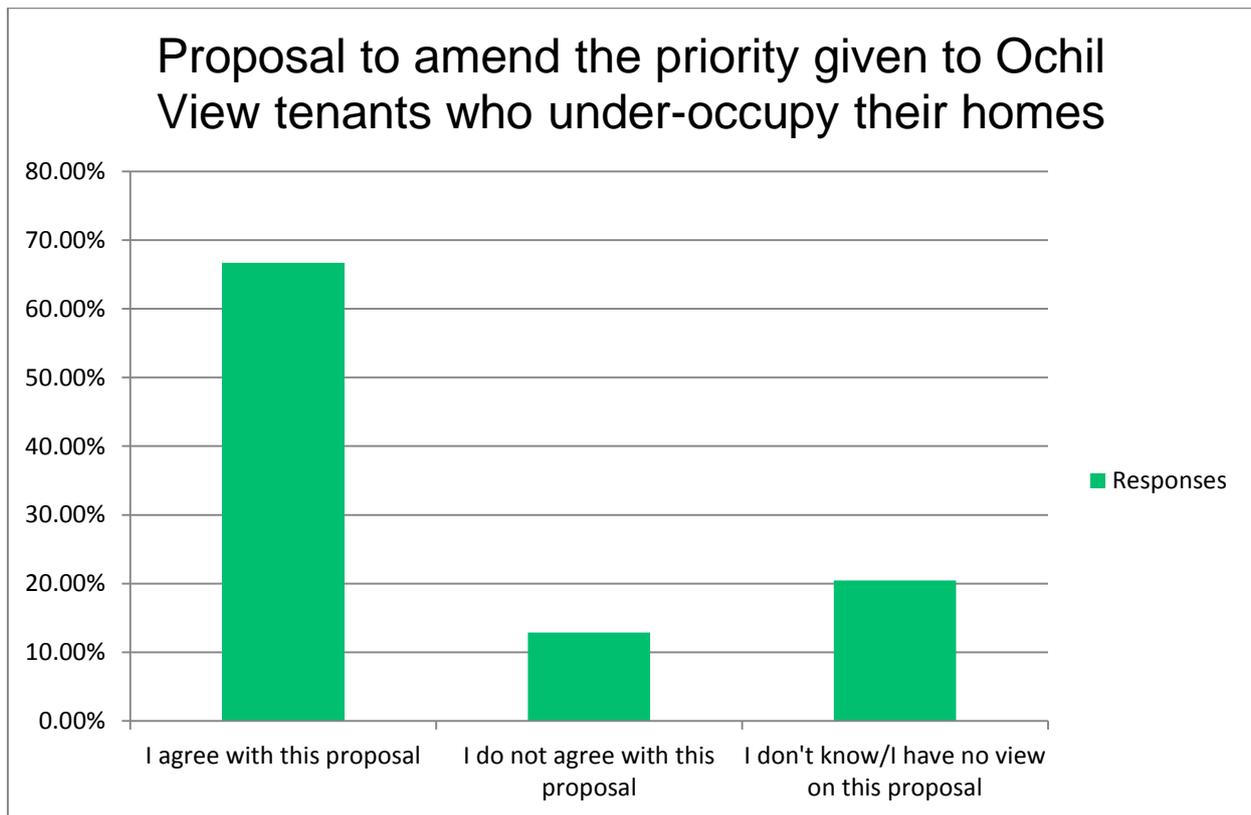
**5.6** Tenants, applicants and RTO's were consulted on a proposal to grant the Customer Services Committee the authority to make exceptional allocations, outside the Allocations Policy. 93 responses were received.

**5.7** The proposal was supported by 82.8 % to 7.53% to grant the Customer Services Committee the power to make exceptional allocations. Removing the respondents who answered "don't know", which were 9.68% of all respondents makes a 9:1 majority in favour of the proposal.



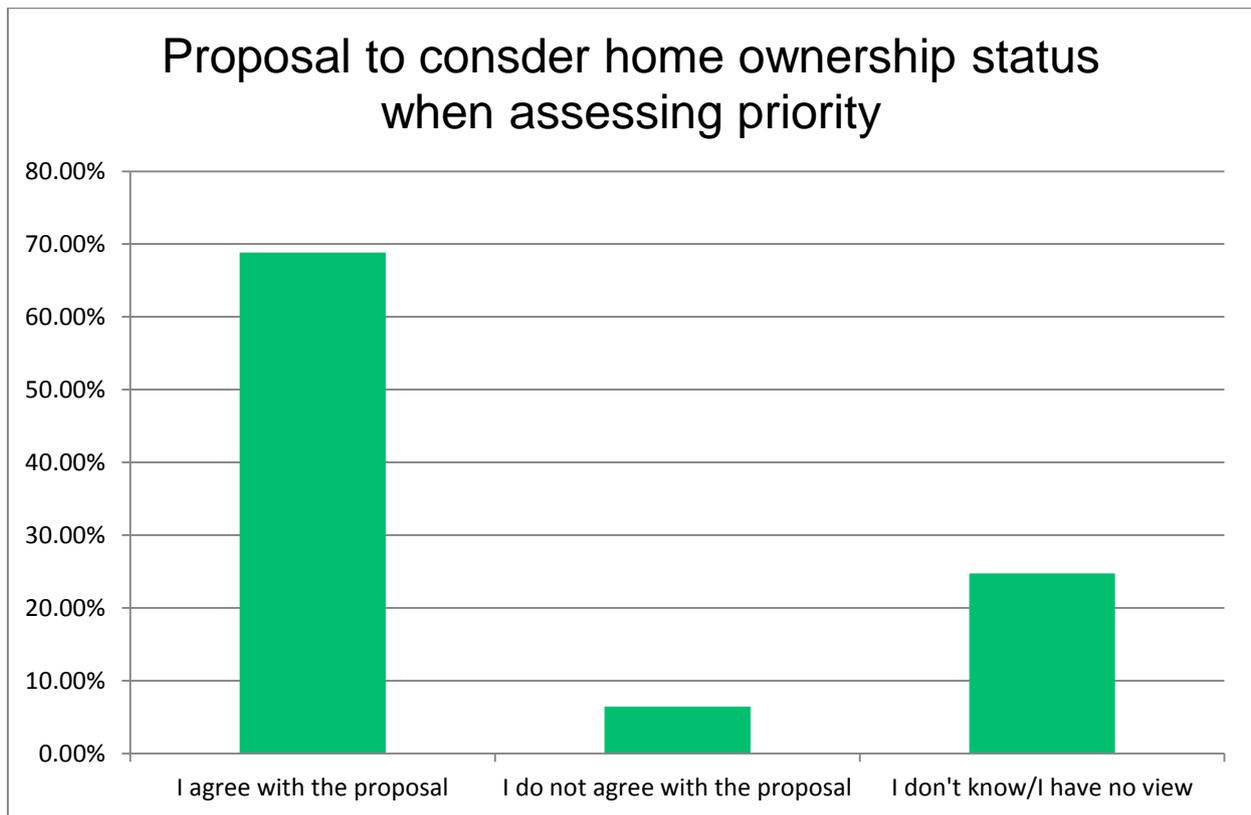
**5.8** Tenants, applicants and RTO's were consulted on a proposal to amend the priority given to Ochil View tenants who were under-occupying their homes and who may be subject to the Bedroom Tax. 93 responses were received.

**5.9** The proposal was supported by 66.7 % to 12.9% to amend the priority given to Ochil View tenants who are under-occupying their homes. Removing the respondents who answered "don't know", which were 20.43 % of all respondents makes a 4:1 majority in favour of the proposal.



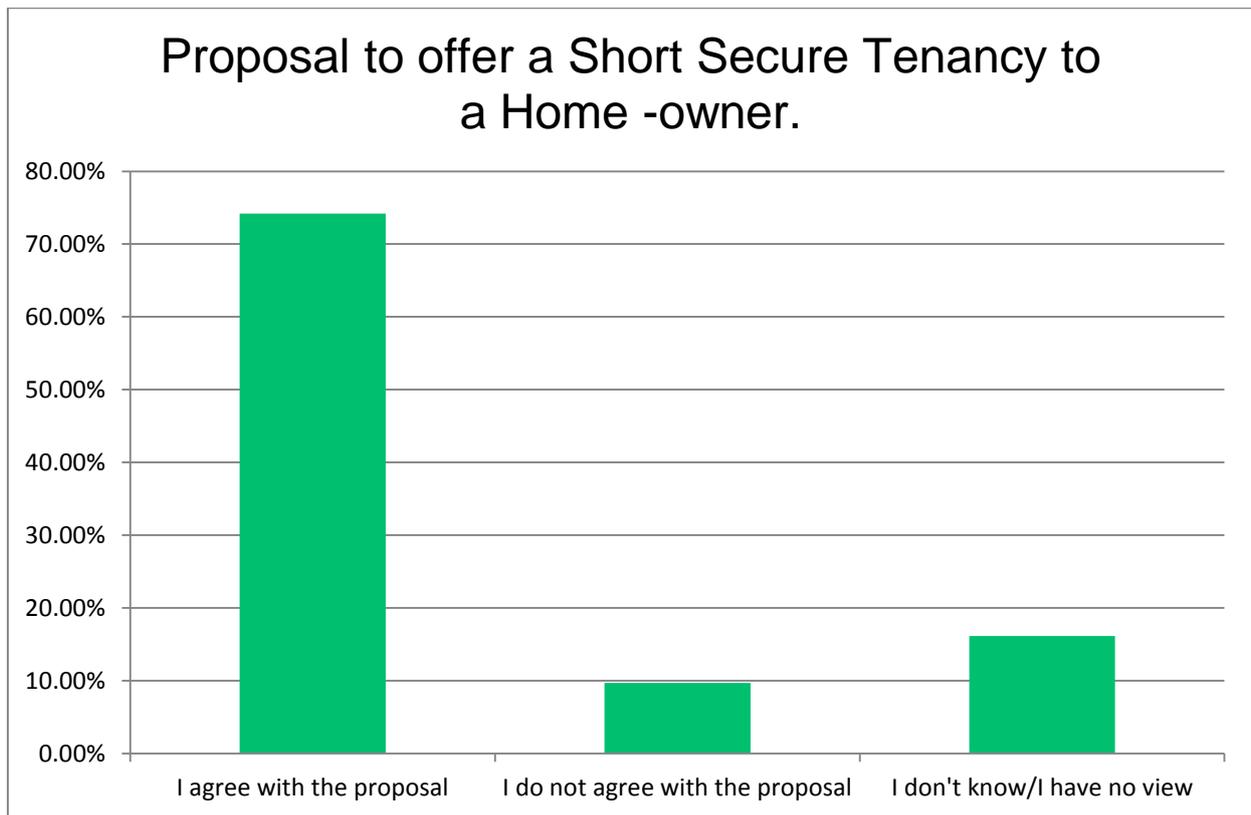
**5.10** Tenants, applicants and RTO's were consulted on a proposal to take home ownership into account when considering priority in housing allocation. 93 responses were received.

**5.11** The proposal was supported by 68.8 % to 6.45% to consider home ownership when assessing the priority given to applicants. Removing the respondents who answered “don't know”, which were 24.7 % of all respondents makes a 9:1 majority in favour of the proposal.



**5.12** Tenants, applicants and RTO's were consulted on a proposal to grant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy when offering a property to an applicant who was currently a home-owner. 93 responses were received.

**5.13** The proposal was supported by 74.19 % to 9.68% to offer a SSST when an offer was made to a home owner. Removing the respondents who answered "don't know" which were 16.1 % of all respondents makes a 9:1 majority in favour of the proposal



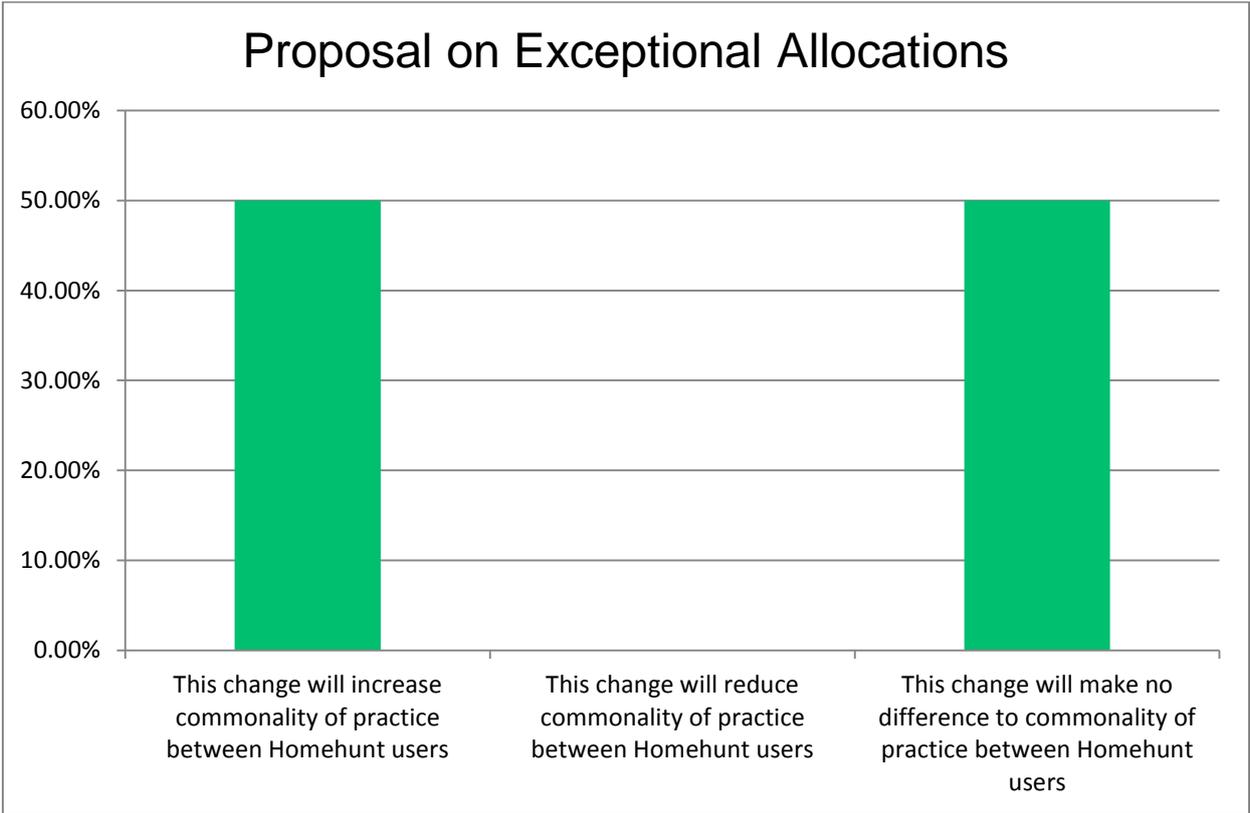
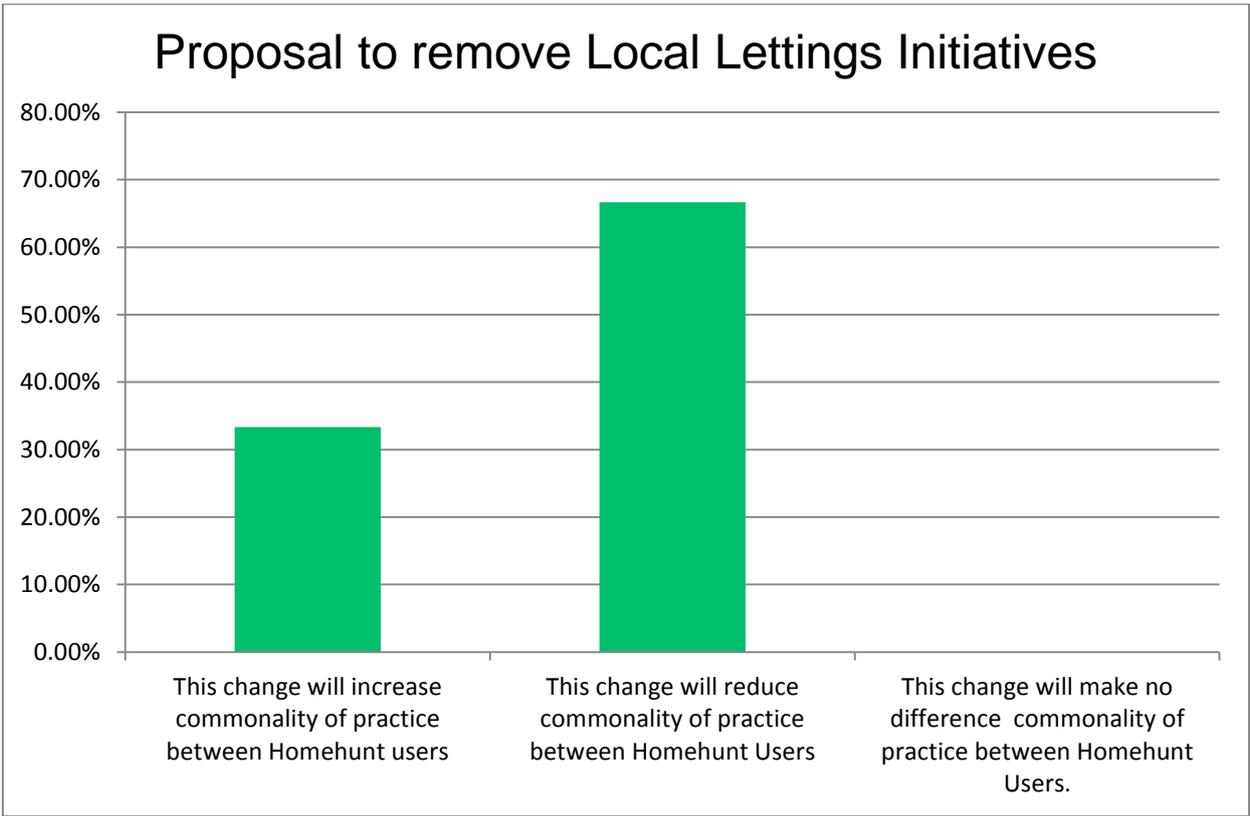
#### 5.14 Consulting other stakeholders

The Association consulted the following corporate stakeholders:

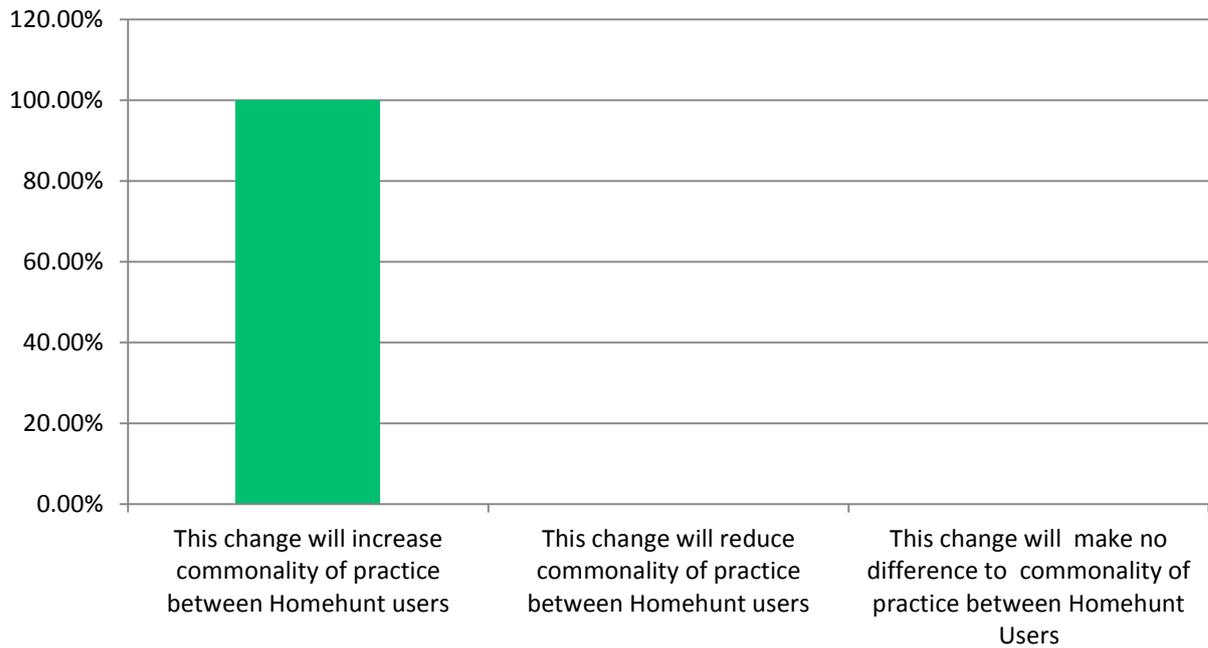
- Clackmannanshire Council (CHR partner)
- Paragon Housing Association (CHR Partner)
- Homehunt Partners (7 RSL partners)

#### 5.15 No responses were received from CHR partners

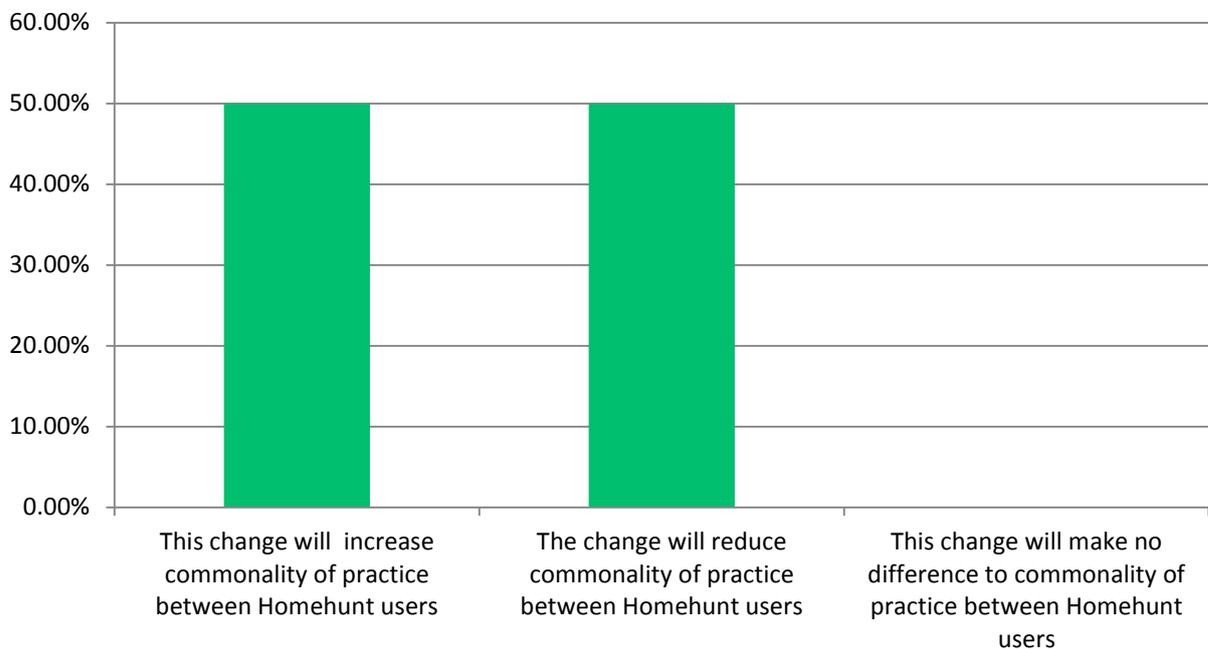
**5.16** Homehunt partners were consulted on a proposal were consulted on a proposal to remove Local Lettings Initiatives from the Housing Allocation Policy.3 responses were received. The low number of responses makes percentages unrepresentative however responses were as follows. In all cases, Homehunt partners were asked whether the proposed change would increase, decreases or make no difference to the degree of commonality between Homehunt Partners.

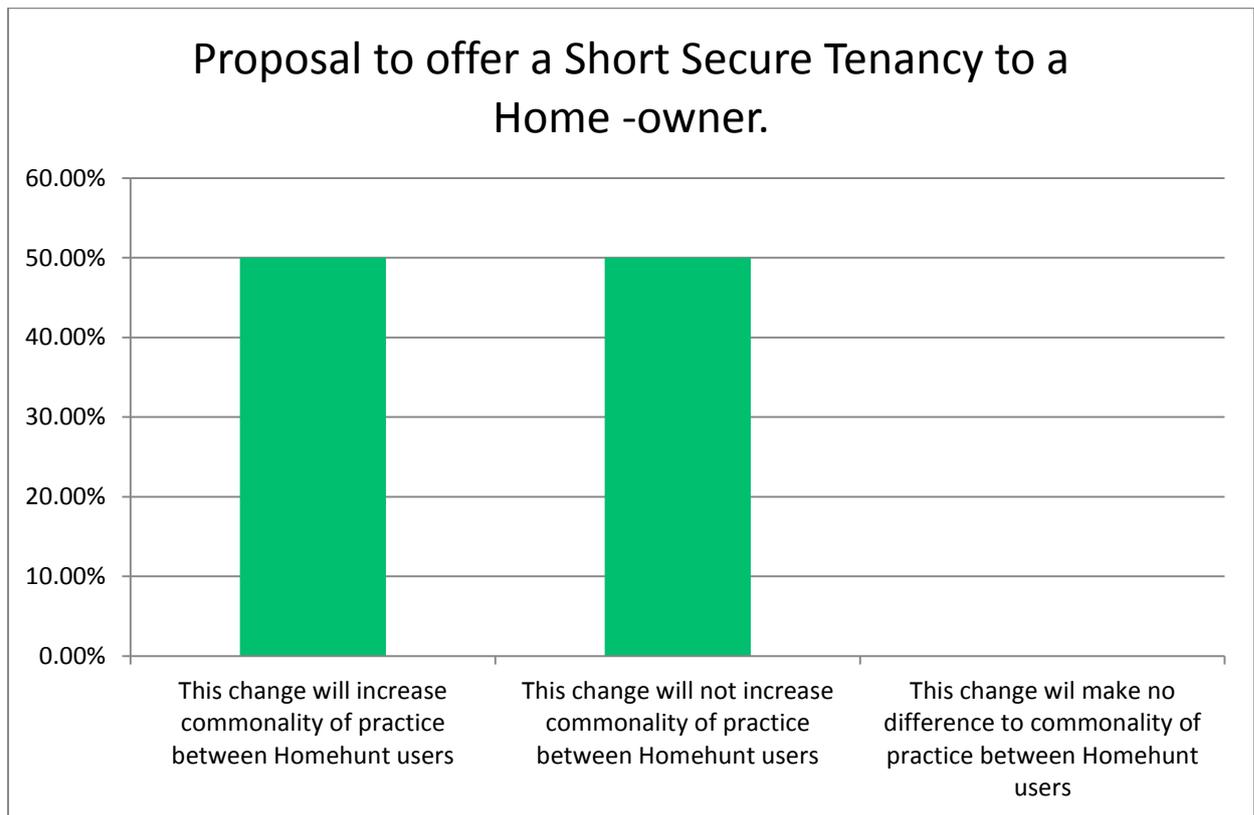


## Proposal to amend the priority given to Ochil View tenants who under-occupy their homes



## Proposal to consider home ownership status when assessing priority





#### **5.17 Consultation Period**

The Consultation period commenced on 1st July 2017 and ended on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

#### **5.18 Other issues related to consultation**

No reminders were issued during the consultation period. There is no minimum level of response and as the consultation relates to compliance with legislation, the views of those consulted cannot be binding on the Association. The decisions on matters arising from consultation will be made by recommendation of the Customer Services Committee to the Management Committee and the outcome of consultation will be reported to participants by publishing a report on the Association's website

### **6.0 REGULATORY, LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

**6.1** The Association must comply with legislation, as set out in Section 3 of the Allocations Policy 2013 including:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 1998

**6.2** The nature and extent of compliance with the above legislation is set out in the Allocations Policy. There is no concern that the Association is not compliant with current legislation. The Association must prepare to comply with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, with the issues of non-compliance having been set out in the report to the Customer Services Committee in April 2017

### **6.3** The Social Housing Charter

#### Outcomes 7, 8 and 9 Housing options

- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them
- Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options
- People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

#### Outcome 10: Access to social housing

- People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

## **7.0 COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Section 3 of the Tenant Participation Strategy states:

The Association will consult Tenants, Registered Tenant Organisations and other service users by:

- Publicising proposals on our website and asking for feedback
- Publicising proposals on our Facebook page, and asking for feedback
- Reviewing feedback as recorded in Complaints Register and including this feedback in the review of services
- Contacting tenants who have expressed views and given feedback and asking for their further comments on proposals
- Carrying out surveys and questionnaires
- Consulting tenants at meetings of Registered Tenant Organisations and the Involved Residents Group

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND PROCUREMENT**

**8.1** Cost of writing to 905 applicants who have not provided an email address each @ £0.528 = £477.84

**8.2** Cost of email to 1309 applicants who have provided email address £ 150.00 [AiAo].

**8.3** Additional costs of article in June 2017 Newsletter : £nil

**8.4** Costs of production of 500 prompt cards: £200

## 9.0 KEY RISKS

### Risk Map

Risk	Raw Risk (High/Med/Low)	Mitigated Action	Residual Risk (High/Med/Low)
Breaches of Legislation (other than H&S)	High	No legal advice has been taken or is felt to be required at this time Consultation focusses on published Scottish Government advice Association is acting in advance of legal deadline for implementation of changes	Medium/low

## 10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE USERS

### 10.1 We aim to:

- Allow fair and open access to our housing register
- Provide information to people in housing need
- Make best use of our existing housing stock
- Maximise choice available to applicants
- Be accountable to our customers
- Help to develop sustainable communities
- Promote partnership
- Promote Equality of Opportunity

## 11.0 COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC/OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To provide a comprehensive and responsive customer service to tenants, sharing and factored owners which supports sustainable tenancies and delivers customer satisfaction (Strategic Objective 2) (Customer Service)
- 
- To actively promote and support resident engagement in the management, maintenance and development of their homes (Strategic Objective 3) Resident Participation)

## 12.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Association aims to enable participation in our consultation and offers a range of methods by which customers can participate as an aid to doing do. All consultation material ( including the Association's newsletter) bears the "Happy to Translate" logo

**13.0 CONCLUSION**

**13.1** Consultation has supported the Association's Proposals and the Association should proceed to amend its Allocations Policy on the basis of the changes proposed

Approved by (Dept Manager)	Date	Signature
Graeme Wilson Head of Customer Services	7/9/17	

