	The Stevenage & Uttlesford Audit Partnership **Internal Audit Report – Housing Allocations 2006-07** **Final Report**	

To: Rod Chamberlain, Executive Manager – Housing Services

For information: Alasdair Bovaird - Chief Executive
Phil O'Dell – Executive Manager – Finance & Asset Strategy
Michael Perry – Executive Manager – Corporate Governance
Liz Petrie – Housing Management Manager

1.   Introduction

An audit of *Housing Allocations* has been carried out as part of the 2006-07 audit plan. Detailed tests have been carried out on the systems of control and the management of risk within this area.

2.   Findings and recommendations

The detailed findings and recommendations are set out in the attached appendices. A Management Action Plan is attached and we would be grateful if you would arrange for its completion and return by 1 December 2006. A satisfaction survey has been sent to the Housing Management Manager, Liz Petrie.

3.   Conclusions

No significant problems were identified during our work. It can therefore be concluded that the systems of control are functioning satisfactorily. The risk of error or misadministration is therefore low.

Simon Martin
Audit Partnership Manager
6 November 2006

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS 2006-07

1.1   AREAS COVERED DURING THE AUDIT

The key areas of possible risk identified at the planning stage of the audit were as follows:

a) No Allocation Review Panel for the decision process

b) Inadequate points system / incorrect prioritising of applicants

c) Applicants chosen are not considered for housing

d) Voids not reported promptly to allocation staff

e) Void properties unoccupied for long periods

f) Changes in circumstances are not updated/considered

g) Applicants 'queue jump'

h) Insufficient skilled staff available to process applications

i) No policy / procedures for the timely letting of properties to the priority needs

j) No policy with regards to nominating applicants for housing by RSL

k) Tenancy changes not notified to Rents and Council Tax

l) Inaccurate/lack of information to Applicants "Rights to Information"

m) Non-adherence to the Homeless Act 2002

The methodology stated in the terms of reference document was used to establish and test the controls that management have in place for mitigating or reducing the above risks to an acceptable level.

1.2   OVERALL AUDIT OPINION

Subject to the matter raised below it was confirmed that effective controls are in place to support the administration of the Housing Allocations. We are therefore pleased to report that the likelihood of significant error or misadministration is low.

2004/05 AUDIT

1.3   PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous audit resulted in two recommendations, both of which have been implemented.

2006/07 AUDIT

1.4   INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

During the audit we identified that there are discrepancies between the points scheme published on the Council's website and the hardcopy printed leaflet. There is a risk this could lead to a possible dispute over the allocation of housing and reputational damage to the Council. It is recommended that the information published is consistent and updated immediately. Details of the discrepancies we identified is set out below.

		Website	Printed Leaflets
Unsuitable Housing	Lack of adequate heating	3	4
	Lack of hot water	2	3
	Lacking appropriate garden facilities for children	1	2
Local Connection with UDC	If non resident to UDC scores any needs points extra points will be added if they have full time employment in the Uttlesford District.	0	1
	Strong family connection in Uttlesford District	0	2
	15 previous residence in Uttlesford as a juvenile	0	4
	Returning member of HM Forces	0	4

Meng-Chee Leong
October 2006

Management Action Plan For: - HOUSING ALLOCATIONS 2006 -07

Appendix / Para	Recommendation	Significance * Low ** Med *** High	Agreed / Not agreed	Officer Responsible	Officer Comments	Implementation date
1.4	Information published is congruent and updated immediately.	**	Agreed	Liz Petrie	Implemented.	25 October 2006

Signed _____ (Executive Manager)   Date _____