

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 4 December 2014

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Title: Allocations Policy

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Item for decision

Summary

1. The new Housing Allocations Policy has been developed with regard to recent statutory guidance. It has also been influenced by feedback from consultation carried out with the public, partners and members in order to best reflect the housing needs of local people, and to achieve the right balance of priorities within the allocations scheme.
2. This policy will replace the previous Housing Allocations Policy and if approved by Cabinet will be implemented from 1 January 2015.

Recommendations

3. That the Cabinet approves the adoption of the new Housing Allocations Policy.

Financial Implications

4. None

Background Papers

5. None

Published Papers

6. Providing social housing for local people. Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities – DCLG December 2013
7. Uttlesford District Council's Housing Allocations Policy

Impact

- 8.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has taken place with members , the public and partners
Community Safety	N/A

Equalities	The policy has been equality impact assessed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The new government guidance is not mandatory but members must have regard to it and must justify any departure from it
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

9. The council implemented its current Housing Allocation Policy in January 2013.
10. This policy took into account the flexibilities given to local authorities in the writing of their allocations policy by the government's 2012 statutory guidance document and followed a period of extensive consultation.
11. The government has since issued further guidance which particularly highlights their view that local authorities should ensure that they prioritise applicants who can demonstrate a close association with their local area.
12. Following consultation new eligibility criteria have been introduced for applicants wishing to join the housing register. The changes give a far greater degree of priority to people with a local connection and those who do not have the financial resources to meet their housing need within the private sector.
13. Changes have also been made to prioritisation and allocation of accommodation available to applicants on the Housing Register and the offer that can be made to accepted homelessness cases, including the use of the private sector when there are suitable properties available.
14. Additional priority may still be given to some accepted homelessness cases eligible to join the housing register. This is because there are homelessness applicants who have greater needs than others, by virtue of their particular circumstances. This extra priority is not dependant on, or related to, the type/tenure of temporary accommodation they occupy.
15. The policy will be implemented from the 1 January 2015. Applicants on the register at that date who do not meet the new eligibility criteria will be contacted and removed from the register. Applicants who as at the 31st December 2014 are within six months of meeting the residency criteria will be allowed to remain on the register providing they meet all other eligibility criteria.

16. Applicants who have made homeless applications prior to the 1 January 2015 will be dealt with in accordance with the existing allocations policy.

17. The Housing Board has reviewed and approved this policy and has recommended its adoption by Cabinet.

Risk Analysis

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The council pays no heed to new government guidance on local allocations	1 Little or no risk as guidance will be considered fully and the outcome of these deliberations will be fully documented	2 Some Risk. There is a risk of legal challenge if members depart from the guidance without having good grounds for doing so	The Guidance document has been brought before members so that reasons for either amending the allocations policy or keeping the policy unchanged can be fully considered and debated

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.