

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 13 November 2014

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Title: Allocations Policy

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Item for decision

Summary

1. Following extensive consultation the Council's Allocations Policy has now been revised to take account of local priorities for the allocation of social housing within Uttlesford.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board recommends to Cabinet the adoption of the current draft Allocation Policy.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Published Papers

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

Impact

- 7.

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	The new government guidance is not

Implications	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

8. The council implemented its current Housing Allocation Policy in January 2013.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Changes have also been made to the offer we make to accepted homelessness cases. Whilst we recognise the duties we have to the homeless, we want to be clear that we will use the private sector when there are suitable properties available and that there will be a very limited degree of choice.
13. We still propose to give, by way of a higher banding, additional priority 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.
14. If the Housing Board accepts this final draft of the new Allocations Policy the recommendation is that the document is put before Cabinet for approval.
15. Timing for implementing the new policy will be partly dependant on making any required software changes to our Choice Based Lettings system.

Risk Analysis

16.

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.