

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

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Title: Allocations Policy Update

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Item for information
only

Summary

1. This report is to bring to member's attention the new supplementary statutory guidance on social housing for local authorities that was published at the end of last year.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board considers this guidance document and at the next meeting of the housing board indicates to officers if they wish to see any further amendments to the council's Housing 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	Any changes will require full consultation
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Any changes will need to be 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 now 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. They suggest that one way to do this is to have a minimum residency period of two years.
11. Under the current housing allocations policy anyone who meets the eligibility criteria can join the housing register regardless of where they live or how long they have lived in the area. However applicants who cannot demonstrate a local connection or who have lived in the area for only a limited time, less than six months, are down banded by one band from those applicants in similar housing circumstances but who have a local connection. This gives a degree of priority to people with a local connection but less than is suggested by the new government guidance.
12. Members need to consider the new guidance and whether they feel that local conditions would be better served by amending the current policy in light of the new guidance or whether the current policy reflects the needs of the area.
13. It is proposed that members have time to study this new guidance and its recommendations before discussing with officers whether they would like to commence wider consultation on possible changes to the housing allocation policy.

Risk Analysis

14.

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.