

HOUSING CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by Councillor Steven Wylie at his special decision meeting held on Tuesday 9 April 2013 at 4.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth. Also present were opposition party spokespersons Councillors David Horne and Steve Wemyss.

16 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 1)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

17 Housing Allocation Policy (AI 2)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Elaine Bastable presented her report. Councillor Horne asked questions regarding the changes to the banding system regarding under occupation and the quiet blocks. Elaine Bastable responded that the over 35s policy had not been operating effectively for a long time and therefore there was a move to creating more blocks for mature tenants (over 50) without young families.

Councilor Wemyss then welcomed the inclusion of the armed forces provision and he raised the issue of some Portsmouth residents within the PO7 postcode which would be excluded under the provisions as set out. Councillor Wylie acceded that there were a few roads within the Portsmouth city boundary within PO7 that should be included and thereby named within the policy.

Councillor Wemyss then asked questions regarding the issue of previous Portsmouth residency and the definition of families, as close support could be given by a wider group, not just blood relatives but step and foster children. Councilor Wylie felt that the policy had discretion and that there could be a footnote defining close family links. Elaine Bastable stressed that they would look at individual circumstances to consider the closeness of the family relationship.

It was asked if there was anyone disadvantaged by the policy changes and Elaine Bastable reported that those most affected would be single people, who have their own bedroom or bedsit, but share other facilities as they will no longer be considered to have a housing need and therefore not eligible to join the waiting list. This was not however a disadvantage as people in these circumstances are never offered social housing, as there are always those in greater housing need and there is a lack of social housing for single people under 50 in the city. Councillor Wylie stressed that there was partnership work taking place with housing associations on this issue.

Councillor Wylie welcomed the policy changes and felt it was important for all members to be invited to receive training on this within the next few months so they would be aware of the new policy. He also felt the timeframe for this to be implemented should be to be effective from 1 May 2013 to allow the staff and members to become familiar with this. He thanked the officers for all their hard work on the allocations policy. The allocations policy was then agreed as amended in discussion at this meeting.

DECISIONS:

(1) the Cabinet Member for Housing approved the revised allocations policy that includes the amendments detailed below:

- a) That the policy is amended to ensure members of the Armed Forces and the Reserve Forces will not be disqualified as applicants for accommodation because they do not have a local connection with PCC's districts.**
- b) That the policy is amended to give additional preference to members of the Armed and Reserve Forces who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs.**
- c) That the policy is amended to introduce a Local connection criteria, defined below.**
 - Anyone resident in Portsmouth (PO1 – PO6 postcodes, and the few roads in PO7 that are within the Portsmouth city boundary)**
 - Ex-Portsmouth residents, who have previously lived in the city for five continuous years or more of their adult life.**
 - Close family members of Portsmouth residents who have lived in the city for five years or more, who wish to move to the area to give or receive support.**
 - Anyone with permanent full time employment in Portsmouth.**
 - Anyone resident in the Havant Borough Council areas (PO7 - PO9 postcodes). Havant residents will only be eligible to be considered for council owned properties in the Havant area i.e. the Leigh Park, Crookhorn, or Wecock Farm estates.**
- d) That the policy is amended to give additional preference to Portsmouth residents who have been living in the city for 2 successive years or more.**

- e) **That the policy is amended to include the following changes to the banding scheme.**
- **Additional priority for all social housing tenants who are under occupying a property.**
 - **No additional priority is awarded for living in shared accommodation.**
 - **No additional priority is awarded to applicants who fall within more than one reasonable preference category.**
- f) **That quiet blocks are removed from the list of properties designated for specific categories of applicants and replaced by over 50 blocks.**

(2) The Cabinet member for Housing approved the implementation of the revised allocation policy for both new applicants and current applicants registered on the waiting list.

(3) The Cabinet Member for Housing approved implementation of the policy from 1 May 2013, and asked that members be invited to training sessions.

The meeting concluded at 4.40 pm.

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Councillor Steven Wylie
Cabinet Member for Housing

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