

## Cabinet, 15 June 2016

### Appendix 1- Summary of proposed amendments to the Housing Allocation and Homeless Placements policies

No	Current policy	Proposed change
<b>Housing Allocation Policy</b>		
<b>1</b>	<p><b><i>Residency period</i></b></p> <p>An applicant must have lived in Havering for at least 5 years OR 2 out of the last 5 years before they can join the housing register.</p>	<p>To change the residency period to 6 years (awaiting counsel opinion on extending to 7 years)</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>Residency period</i></b></p> <p><b>An applicant can have a break by living in Havering for 2 out of the last 5 years</b></p>	<p><b>To change the residency period for a continuous 6 year period without a break (or 7 years as above)</b></p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b><i>Financial circumstances</i></b></p> <p>The current household income threshold is £27,500.</p>	<p><b>To increase to 36,000</b>, which is the level of income needed to afford to privately rent in the borough at current average market rents</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b><i>Unacceptable behaviour</i></b></p> <p>An applicant found guilty of unacceptable behavior is allowed to be on the housing register and successfully bid for a property BUT an offer of accommodation may be withdrawn once they are successful in bidding for a property.</p>	<p><b>Applicants found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour will be excluded from joining the housing register altogether.</b></p> <p>Examples of the behavior includes anti-social behavior; obtaining a tenancy by deception; sub-letting social housing; unspent housing or welfare benefit convictions; providing false or misleading information and threat or actual violence against neighbors, council staff, members and Council contractors.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b><i>Meeting housing need</i></b></p> <p>Council or private sector leased tenants who are not in housing need but have been in their accommodation for 5 years can be moved to alternative accommodation.</p>	<p>Only applicants with an identified housing need will be provided with or moved to alternative accommodation</p> <p>Examples of housing need includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless people,</li> <li>• People who need to move on welfare or medical grounds where their situation is being made worse by their current housing,</li> <li>• People living in unsanitary, unsatisfactory or</li> </ul>

		<p>overcrowded housing, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who would face hardship unless they move to another area.</li> </ul>
6	N/A	<p><b>A 'new reduced priority' band</b></p> <p>To implement a new 'reduced priority' band for accepted homeless households who do not meet the Havering 6 year residency period.</p> <p>This is because under the homelessness legislation and the Housing Act, homeless households have a reasonable preference (housing need) and therefore cannot be excluded from joining the housing register even if they do not meet the 6 year residency qualification criteria.</p> <p>The local connection rules under the homelessness legislation is different from the residency criteria that a local authority can apply under the Allocation Scheme (e.g. under homelessness legislation, it is 6 out of the last 12 months or a family association). This proposal ensures that we continue to comply with the requirements placed on us by law.</p>
7	<p><b>Priority Banding system</b></p> <p>There are four priority bands with a number of different conditions which can be difficult to understand.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency Rehousing Band (ER)</li> <li>2. Community Contribution Band (CCR)</li> <li>3. Home-seeker Band (H)</li> <li>4. Private Sector Lease Band (PSL)</li> </ol> <p>In addition, a number of moderate housing circumstances are considered under the Emergency Rehousing Band which result in a higher number of cases in the highest priority band than should be the case.</p>	<p>To change to five priority bands to make it easier for residents to understand how the assessment and decision regarding their priority are made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency Rehousing Band (ER)</li> <li>2. Community Contribution Band 1 (CCR1)</li> <li>3. Community Contribution Band 2 (CCR2)</li> <li>4. Home-seeker Band (H)</li> <li>5. Reduced Priority (RP) – for homeless households as explained in (5) above.</li> </ol>
8	<p><b>Choice based lettings and assisted bidding (direct lets)</b></p> <p>Operate choice based letting system by advertising all properties and yet some that residents place bids on are allocated directly to resident through 'assisted bids' and therefore not technically available to bid on.</p>	<p>Continue to operate Choice Based Lettings system but not to advertise the properties identified to be allocated under 'assisted bid'</p> <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstances where a resident can be</li> </ul>

	This causes frustration for residents whose expectations are falsely raised	<p>made an 'assisted bid' is clearly set out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the number of properties allocated under 'assisted bids' so that at least 70% are available for residents to bid on.</li> <li>• Regularly report on the numbers and outcomes of properties that are allocated under 'assisted bids'</li> </ul>
9	<p><b><i>Number of offer of accommodation that can be made</i></b></p> <p>There are different numbers of offers allowed and different penalties apply depending on the housing band priority an applicant is placed in.</p>	<p>Implement a one offer only policy.</p> <p>Applicants who refuse a reasonable offer of accommodation will be removed from the housing register and not allowed to re-apply for one year.</p> <p>For other applicant like homeless households who refuse a reasonable offer, re-housing duty will be discharged and their temporary accommodation will be withdrawn.</p> <p>Applicants can appeal against an offer if they consider it to be unreasonable, and if successful, will receive another offer.</p> <p>The one offer policy will not apply to sheltered housing.</p>
10	N/A	<p><b><i>Sheltered Housing eligibility criteria</i></b></p> <p><b>Implement a new sheltered housing eligibility criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 years and over or</li> <li>• Aged 55 to 59 years and require high level of support due to frailty, ill-health or restricted mobility.</li> <li>• Single or joint applicants with no children</li> <li>• In need of the housing support provided by the scheme</li> </ul>
11	N/A	<p><b><i>Policy implementation arrangement</i></b></p> <p>Allow a transitional period of 6 months to implement the changes so that those who will no longer qualify have this time to continue to bid for properties.</p> <p>If they have not been able to move by then, their application will be cancelled and removed from the housing register from Jan 2017 (subject to Cabinet approval of the new policy in June and new policy implementation from July 2016).</p>

## Homeless Placements Policy

<b>1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<p><b><i>Homeless Placements Pathway</i></b></p> <p>Homeless household requiring temporary accommodation will generally be offered accommodation in this order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bed Breakfast (if there is no vacancy in hostels)</li> <li>• Hostel accommodation</li> <li>• Private sector leased (PSL) accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>The household will remain in the private sector leased accommodation until they are successful in bidding for alternative settled accommodation.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<p><b><i>Discharging homelessness duty by using private rented sector accommodation.</i></b></p> <p>To use the Council's powers under the Localism Act 2011 to discharge its homelessness duty by arranging for a private landlord to make a suitable offer of private rented for a period of at least 12 months.</p> <p>In this case, temporary accommodation will not be required.</p> <p>This will be applied to accepted homeless households who made applications after 9th November 2012.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<p><b><i>Factors to consider in making appropriate placements</i></b></p> <p>As there is shortage of affordable accommodation in Havering, in order to meet demand properties will be acquired anywhere-within and outside Havering.</p> <p>Therefore this provides a guide on the factors that should be considered when making an appropriate placements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical needs</li> <li>• Welfare and Support needs</li> <li>• Employment needs</li> <li>• Education needs</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<p><b><i>Managing transfer moves within temporary accommodation</i></b></p> <p>Sets out the circumstances to be considered in</p>

		<p>order to prioritise a move if an existing household in temporary accommodation needs to be moved to alternative temporary accommodation because the property has either become unsuitable or the landlord wants the leased property back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) <b>Emergency needs</b> – e.g. serious disrepair that poses a threat to life, violence or an evidenced serious health or medical need.</li><li>b) Shared facilities - Households with children or pregnant women in non self-contained Bed &amp; Breakfast</li><li>c) <b>Private sector leased property hand-back-</b> following the end of the lease.</li><li>d) Unsuitability - where the temporary accommodation has become unsuitable e.g. disrepair that cannot be rectified while the tenant is in situ</li><li>e) <b>Under occupation</b></li><li>f) <b>Overcrowding</b></li></ul>
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