

COMMITTEE: EXECUTIVE BOARD
DATE: 24TH JULY 2019
SUBJECT: HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME
PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR WENDY BOWKETT
Ward(s) affected: ALL

Brief description of report content and the decision being asked for:

Summary:

This report considers amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme.

The scheme defines who can register for social housing within East Lindsey and how properties will be allocated.

These amendments are due to the following reasons:

1. to ensure compliance with recent statutory guidance in respect of victims of domestic abuse and eligibility requirements
2. to comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act and Code of Guidance
3. to acknowledge the management of the housing register will return to ELDC from October 2019
4. to enable the new IT housing register system to be configured in-line with the Housing Allocation Scheme
5. to ensure banding priorities accurately meet the needs of the district, applicants and enable the council to minimise the use of homelessness accommodation
6. to ensure compliant with LCC Youth Housing protocol

Recommendations:

That Executive Board approves the changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme

REASON: To ensure the reasons outlined in the summary.

This report has been prepared by:

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

Members, housing applicants, statutory organisations and partner agencies including social housing providers

This report is number 1 in a series of 1.

This report has been signed off by:

Michelle Howard

The following policies form a context to this report:

Housing Allocation Scheme

This report is a key decision included in the Forward Plan.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report which are published but do not contain exempt information)

1. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
2. Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018
3. Improving Access to Social Housing for Victims of Domestic Abuse in Refuges or Other Types of Temporary Accommodation - Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England
4. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
5. Lincolnshire Youth Housing Protocol – Transition from Children’s Services to Adult Housing Related and (Semi) Independent Living

OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. N/A

Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985

Is the report Exempt – No

**Please contact the person who has written this report or Michelle Howard Tel. No. 01507 613216
e-mail: michelle.howard@e-lindsey.gov.uk if you want more information about this report or the background papers.**

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Each local authority is required by the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for the allocation of social housing. This applies to stock holding and non stock holding authorities

- 1.2. The scheme must state how social housing will be allocated and must comply with housing legislation and the code of guidance. There is some discretion which allows authorities to frame the scheme to meet the needs of their district however emphasis is placed on ensuring that social homes go to the most vulnerable in society and those who need it most

2.0. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The current Housing Allocation scheme for East Lindsey has been in operation since 2015. Minor amendments to the scheme can be made but where a change is proposed that would affect the relative priority of a large number of people or any significant alteration to procedures it is recommended that current applicants should be informed by personal letter
- 2.2. The council should also consult with social landlords which it has nomination arrangements.
- 2.3. The changes to the scheme are not significant to the majority of applicants but due to bringing the management of the housing register back in-house and to ensure the amendments meet the needs of the district it was considered appropriate to carry out a short consultation exercise. This gave stakeholders, applicants and members an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. At the point of writing the report, the consultation exercise has not resulted in any significant concerns having been raised. A full list of comments received during the consultation exercise will be shared alongside the report at Executive Board.
- 2.4. The revised scheme will meet the legal requirements placed upon the council, improve the prospects of local people being successful in being housed and make the allocation of social housing fairer for East Lindsey residents whilst still ensuring homes are prioritised for those in high housing need.

3.0. SUBJECT INFORMATION AND ISSUES/FACTS AND FIGURES

- 3.1. The revised Housing Allocation Scheme is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2. The main changes are:
 - to make clear that the housing register will be managed by ELDC rather than Waterloo Housing Group
 - Restrict the local connection criteria to East Lindsey rather than Lincolnshire. Non East Lindsey residents with an evidenced need to reside in the district will be eligible in certain circumstances as described in the Allocation Scheme

- To ensure victims of domestic abuse who have recently moved into a refuge or other temporary supported accommodation within the district are eligible for inclusion onto the housing register
- To assist with the timely rehousing of people who are rough sleeping within the district and engaging with the council and other support services
- To ensure the council meets its corporate parenting responsibilities to Lincolnshire care leavers
- To assist hospitals with reducing bed blocking when a patient is ready to be discharged and prioritising those applicants who will be going into hospital and it is clear that upon discharge they will not be able to return home

4.0. SUPPLEMENTARY FACTS

- 4.1. ELDC contracted the management of the housing register to New Linx Housing Trust (now part of Waterloo Housing Group) in 2010. This contract has been extended but expires on 30th September 2019.
- 4.2. The management will be brought back in house and a new IT system is being purchased. This system will be configured to comply with the revised Housing Allocation Scheme and will provide an important tool through which to deliver an integrated housing and homelessness service.

5.0. COUNCILLOR COMMENTS – If no comments are received from one or more of the Ward Members consulted state which Councillor(s) did not respond

- 5.1. None received

6.0. DISCUSSION / CONSIDERATION – ISSUES / CONCLUSION

- 6.1. No further items for considerations
- 6.2. It is recommended that ELDC adopt the revised policy.

7.0. OTHER OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (drawn from previous sections)

- 7.1. None

8.0. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Subject Officer	Deadline	Responsible
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- 8.1. None

9.0. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1. The only identified risk associated is the risk of legal challenge if the scheme is not amended to take account of current legislation and guidance

10.0. ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

- 10.1. There are minimal benefits to the local economy other than indirectly through reducing homelessness and bed blocking withing hospitals.

11.0. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS. PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE NAME OF OFFICER RESPONDING

- 11.1. The The main legal considerations relate to ensuring the scheme complies with housing legislation and guidance

12.0. INCLUDE IF APPROPRIATE AND ONLY BRIEF EXPLANATION OF ISSUE. PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE NAME OF OFFICER RESPONDING

- 12.1. **Environmental issues** – N/A
- 12.2. **Human Resources** - N/A
- 12.3. **Section 17** -
- 12.4. **FOI/Human Rights/Data Protection** – N/A
- 12.5. **Equality and Diversity** - An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and no issues identified.

13.0. HOW DO THE ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DELIVER OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY?

- 13.1. The changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme contributes towards enabling the council to meet the priorities of the corporate strategy:
- Through working with all our partners we strive to achieve an improved quality of life for all in East Lindsey by having:
 - inequalities reduced through focused attention on the groups and communities that need extra help
 - Residents who have a choice of good quality homes
 - Protect and support vulnerable residents and communities

- Support those in our community most adversely affected by Welfare Reforms
- Bringing services closer to vulnerable residents

14.0. APPENDICES INCLUDED

14.1. Appendix A - Housing Allocation Scheme