

Agenda Item No: 3 **Report No:** 164/13
Report Title: Changes to Housing Allocation Policy
Report To: Housing Working Party **Date:** 3 October 2013
Cabinet Member: Cllr Nicholson
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Corporate Head – Housing Services

Contact Officer(s)-

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Post Title(s):	Head of Housing Management	Housing Needs Manager
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Purpose of Report:

To advise on proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocation Policy following an on-line consultation

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To agree to the implementation of changes proposed with effect from 1 December 2013
- 2 To authorise officers to consult on detailed changes to village connection rules and consider 'community contribution' requirements with a view to implementation if agreed by December 2014

Reasons for Recommendations

To enable the effects of changes to the Council's Allocation Policy to be assessed

Information

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- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 March 2013 the Housing Working Party requested the Corporate Head of Housing Services report the result of public consultation on the proposed immediate changes to the Allocation Policy. This is given in Appendix 1
- 1.2 The Head of Housing Management was requested to reword the amendment regarding relaxing the 'Village Connection as shown on

page 5 of Appendix 1 to report no 59/13, to include more detail about the proposed quota for allocations to those in need.

- 1.3 It is suggested therefore that in the case of one rural property in ten applicants who do not have a specific connection to the particular village but have an identified housing need can be considered for it. This would not of course apply in the case of Housing Association Rural Exception sites where local connections are specifically required.
- 1.4 Further information was also required on amendments to the 'Priority for Medical Reasons. On checking with other East Sussex Authorities most use a 4 grade system for Medical priority, ranging from Overriding Medical Authority to No Medical Priority. Most are undertaken by medically trained officers and attempt to assess the effect the accommodation is having, if any, on any existing medical condition.
- 1.5 East Sussex County Council has recently ceased to part fund the Special Needs Housing Officer post and it is felt that this officer can be utilised in undertaking medical assessments to bring about the desired cost reduction. It is also suggested that each applicant submits one medical form only and not be permitted to submit multiple forms on behalf of each member of the family, thus reducing the amount of paperwork received.
- 1.6 With regard to amending the policy to take into account working households and those making a positive contribution it is proposed to delay further research into this aspect until the effect of the current changes can be assessed.

Financial Appraisal

- 2 There should be a cost saving on Medical assessments.

Legal Implications

The Legal Services Department has made the following comments:

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Sustainability Implications

I have completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire and there are no significant effects as a result of these recommendations

Risk Management Implications

There is a risk if these recommendations are not implemented that the Housing Register may become completely oversubscribed and unmanageable.

Equality Screening

- 4 I have completed an equality screening and there are no adverse effects on any groups.

Background Papers

5 Housing Allocation Policy

Localism Act 2011

Appendices

6 Appendix 1