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# **Scrutiny Review - Housing Allocations & Lettings Policy**

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TUESDAY, 19TH DECEMBER, 2006 at 18:30 HRS - 225 HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, LONDON, N22 8HQ.

MEMBERS: Councillors Adje, Baker, Bevan, Bull, Edge, Egan and C. Harris

## **AGENDA**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)**

**2. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of urgent business. Where the item is already included on the agenda, it will appear under that item but new items of urgent business will be dealt with at item 11.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the Authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest.

**4. MINUTES: (PAGES 1 - 4)**

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2006.

**5. FEEDBACK FROM CONNEXIONS DIRECT: (PAGES 5 - 6)**

To consider feedback from Connexions Direct on the impact the new policy has had on young people involved with the Connexions Service and seeking suitable accommodation.

**6. UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF THE HOUSING REGISTER:**

To consider the outcome of the recent reassessment of the housing register, particularly to consider the impact on the Local Connections and Good Neighbour schemes.

**7. ALLOCATIONS & LETTINGS REVIEW ACTION PLAN: (PAGES 7 - 12)**

To consider progress with the Allocations & Lettings Review Action Plan (attached):

**8. HOUSING APPLICATION FORM:**

To consider data protection issues and appropriate wording to enable access to data records. The following wording has been suggested:

“We need to protect the public funds we handle, and we may use the information you have provided on this form to prevent and detect fraud. We may also share this information for the same purposes with other organisations that handle public funds. We may take steps to confirm the information you have given us and check that you do not owe the council money by looking at other relevant information available to the council (for example council tax, electoral register, benefits, or council tenancy records) or through an external agency on a confidential basis. We may also visit you in your home before making an offer.”

**9. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN (PAGES 13 - 22)**

To consider any outstanding issues regarding the capturing of data in respect of the Equalities Impact Assessment relating to the Allocations & Lettings Policy.

**10. DRAFT LEAFLET – YOUR CHOICE, YOUR MOVE: (PAGES 23 - 30)**

To consider the design and layout of the draft leaflet for use in Members’ surgery – draft attached.

**11. URGENT BUSINESS:**

To deal with any items of urgent business admitted at item 2 above.

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**SCRUTINY REVIEW - HOMELESSNESS ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY****MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2006**

Present: Councillors Bevan (Chair), Bull, Baker, Edge, Egan and Harris

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (Agenda Item 1): Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Adje. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Bull, Baker and Edge.
2. **URGENT BUSINESS** (Agenda Item 2) – see agenda item 7 below.
3. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** (Agenda Item 3) – None notified.
4. **MINUTES** – The Minutes of the meeting held 23 August 2006 were agreed and signed.
5. **DRAFT HOUSING CHOICE LEAFLET – A SINGLE LANE OFFERING HOUSING CHOICE AND MEETING LOCAL NEEDS** – Agenda Item 5:

The Panel considered the above draft 'points' leaflet and agreed that more work was needed on this. They considered and compared a number of similar literatures from various Local Authorities and expressed a preference to a leaflet similar to that produced by LB Enfield in terms of layout and style. They also wished to see a Ready Reckoner included in the leaflet to encourage applicants on the Housing Register to work out their points level. However it must be stressed in the leaflet that the Council was not bound in any way by the self judgement of Customers. The only valid points calculation would be that undertaken by the Council. Council Officers would take each Customer through the calculation of points. The Panel was also keen to ensure that information about the Council's Prevention and Options Service and other housing schemes should be included in the leaflet.

Agreed that a further draft of the 'points' leaflet be produced and circulated to Members of the Panel.

**Housing Fraud**

With regards to potential housing fraud it was agreed that the Legal Department should be consulted to find out whether there was a standard statement from the Council on fraud that could be included in the leaflets.

**Prevention and Options.**

With reference to the Prevention and Options Scheme the panel suggested that the Re-Housing Service produce an information leaflet to sit alongside the Homes Connections the Points leaflets.

6. **DRAFT ACTION PLAN** – Agenda Item 6

The Panel considered the draft action plan emanating from the Scrutiny Review. The Panel was pleased to note that action had been taken to implement the recommendations. The implementation of some recommendations was still in progress. The Panel noted the following:

### **Task 5 - Staff Training**

Members wanted to attend part of the training session for staff and it was agreed that members would be provided with the content of the training programme.

### **Task 7 – Housing Application Form and Housing Benefits**

The Panel requested a copy of the new Housing Application Form. They wished to ensure that new tenants were required to indicate the likelihood of claiming housing benefit when they applied to Homes for Haringey. Also that the application form included the necessary permission for the release of data information on the Housing Register. The Action Plan should consider all the various Housing Benefit related elements raised by the Panel and each element should be reported upon. It was agreed that the Policy & Procedures Officer would report back on each area in December 2006.

### **Task 12 - The Housing Register**

The Housing Register had not been reviewed for a number of years and needed to be re-evaluated. The purpose of the current re-evaluation was to ensure that the register was up to date and reviewed on a regular basis thereafter. The Panel was informed that the re-evaluation was in progress; letters had been sent to all tenants on the Housing Register; the closing date for response from tenants was 8<sup>th</sup> October 2006. Tenants were expected to respond to the letter indicating whether they wished to remain on the Housing Register and to enable the Re-housing Service to ensure the correct awarding of priority points and accurate matching of individual housing needs. Reference was made to difficulties encountered with the letters sent out to tenants as it appeared that not all tenants had been reached. However the Panel was assured that measures had been put in place to make sure that all tenants were contacted. Concern was expressed regarding the possibility that some vulnerable tenants might be disadvantaged as a result of any confusion over the issuing of letters. It was suggested that all tenants known to Supporting People Scheme should be identified and visited to ensure that they were not disadvantaged.

It was agreed that further update was needed on the review of the housing register and that Paul Horgan, (Project Manager), be requested to provide a briefing note to update members in December 2006 when the new register is established. The Panel wished to be informed of the result of the modelling impact assessment relating to the local connections and good neighbour factor points, to ensure that the proposed weighting was appropriate.

### **Task 14 - Under occupation scheme**

The Panel wished to ensure that action was taken as early as possible in cases of under occupation to check that any under-occupation was managed sooner rather than later or indeed at all. Members wished to verify that this was clearly covered in the Procedures Manuel to ensure that early action was taken in all cases.

### **Task 19 – Procedures Manuel**

It was agreed that a copy of the Procedures Manuel should be circulated to Members on the Panel on completion, for information purposes only.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment.**

It was agreed that a copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment would be circulated to Members of the Panel for information.

**Prevention & Options Service**

Members were keen to visit the Prevention and Options Service in Wood Green and it was agreed that arrangements would be made to enable individual members to do so.

**Changes to the Lettings Policy**

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee to have details of any changes to the Lettings Policy signed off by the Executive.

7. **URGENT BUSINESS** – Agenda Item 7

**Variation to the Terms of Reference of the Allocations & Lettings Scrutiny Review.**

With regards to the variation to the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Review, Councillor Harris stated that she was under the impression that there would be an item on the agenda of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that 'overt' discussion would take place on the terms of reference. It was noted that the variation to the terms of reference was included in the final report of the Allocations & Lettings Policy Review which was agreed by the Committee. In endorsing the recommendations in the report, the Committee also agreed the variation to the terms of reference.

This misunderstanding was explained and the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee was pleased that this matter had been satisfactorily clarified and stated that in future procedures for dealing with any variation to terms of reference for review panels should be more explicit and adhered to.

Councillor John Bevan  
Chair

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## CONNEXIONS HOUSING REPORT

### PRESENTING ISSUES

1. Young people approaching Station Road are given P&O appointments several weeks after the initial approach date. This can mean that the situation becomes urgent in that the young person requires emergency accommodation before the date given.

**Suggestion:** A reasonable time limit given for appointments. This needs to be agreed upon with the P&O and VAT (Vulnerable Adults Team).

2. Young people approaching P&O, who have been picked up by the Social Services out of hours office, sometimes on several occasions, are not provided with emergency accommodation.

**Suggestion:** Effective joined up working needed between Connexions, Social Services and Housing to ensure appropriate referrals are made and an adequate support package is put into place. This is in the process of taking place in conjunction with relevant services. Clarity is needed around what constitutes an emergency.

3. Young people told that they cannot be housed until they can provide proof that a benefits application has been made. This is to ensure clients are not accruing rent arrears. This means that a letter is needed from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) which takes up to 4 weeks. The delay can result in emergency accommodation being sought or clients being housed by the out of hours services. In extreme cases clients have slept rough. Proof of income/benefits is not a legal requirement.

**Suggestion:** Connections need to be made between the Benefits Agency and Housing as one unavoidably affects the other. The 16/17 year old advisors at the Tottenham Job Centre have stated their interest in working with the Housing Department. This is something that Connexions can lead on.

4. In cases where the Social Services project worker at Apex House is not available young people are told that housing assistance cannot be given in the interim. At present there is only one part time project worker based at Apex House. The other full time worker is on long term sickness leave.

**Suggestions:**

- An alternative arrangement made with Social Services that the young person will be seen in their main offices.
  - A referral is made to Connexions with the understanding that a Section 17 assessment can only be done by Social Services.
  - Housing begin their investigations pending the involvement of Social Services.
5. The P&O process is not adequately explained.

**Suggestions:**

- General processes and procedures explained to young people on approach. This would improve customer relations and encourage transparency.
- Young people made aware whom their P&O officer is once allocated.

**Positive Responses.**

- Customer services has improved in that staff have been polite and helpful to some young people accessing the service.
- One young person reported being dealt with very professionally and respectfully by a member of the P&O Team.



## Lettings Policy

Scrutiny Panel Review: Action Plan @ 8.12.06

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Comment
01	Establish an Action Plan to report on progress implementing the new Lettings Policy and to report on the Scrutiny Panel recommendations made to the Executive Committee.	01.10.06	NL	Complete	The Action Plan was produced reflecting decisions in the minutes of the 12 September Executive Committee. (Minute EX70)
02	Equality Impact Assessment Issues. Produce Action Plan.	01.10.06	NL	Complete	This Action Plan was produced for the Executive Committee but is available to the Scrutiny panel.
03	Produce draft of Leaflet on the Lettings Policy and a Points ' <i>Ready Reckoner</i> '.	19.10.06	NL/TW	Complete	Draft 1 produced. Liaison with Corporate Comm. Commenced.
3.1	Provide Post Comm. Team version to Scrutiny Review Panel	19.10.06	NL	Complete	Draft of Lettings Points leaflet provided to Scrutiny members.
04	Produce final version of Leaflet on the Lettings Policy and a Points ' <i>Ready beckoner</i> '.	01.11.07	NL		Awaiting final design and production.
05	Arrange staff training/Briefing on Lettings Policy and include Legal services element.	01.11.07	AT/JN/NL/ MW	Complete	A range of training activities has taken place for staff, partners.

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Progress
06	Arrange regular 'refresher' briefings on the Lettings Policy developments	May 2007	NL/ MW	Complete	These briefings have been agreed in principal. First one not due until May 2007
07	Confirm position on Housing Benefit (HB)		NL/AT	Complete	When new tenants are signed up by Homes for Haringey they are required to complete HB forms.
08	Subject to modelling and legal advice consider awarding a greater weighting to local connections aspects of the New Lettings Policy, with a view to increasing the (75) points currently proposed..	08.10.06	NL/AT	Complete	The points element of the Lettings policy has been agreed by the Executive Member/Chief Officer.
09	Local Connection points be awarded only to applicants who have lived in Haringey for the two years immediately proceeding their application.	01.10.06	NL	Complete	Agreed. The Lettings Policy has been revised and agreed by the Executive Member/Chief Officer.
10	That the policy makes clear, that where applicants are placed in Temporary accommodation outside the borough, they will be awarded points, as long as they fulfil the residential qualification.	01.10.06	NL	Complete	Agreed. The Lettings Policy has been revised and agreed by the Executive Member/Chief Officer.
11	That the policy states that Local Connection points will not be given to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those placed in Haringey in temporary accommodation by another Council.</li> <li>- Those placed in residential accommodation by another Council</li> <li>- Secure tenants of another Council unless reciprocal arrangements have been agreed.</li> </ul>	01.10.06	NL	Complete	Agreed. The Lettings Policy has been revised and agreed by the Executive Member/Chief Officer.

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Progress
12	Subject to the modelling and Legal advice, consider awarding a greater weighting than the 50 points currently proposed, as a way of rewarding <b>'good neighbour'</b> transfers, thereby increasing the points for those applicants who have abided by the terms of their tenancy conditions and have no rent arrears.	04.10.06	NL/JH	Complete	This matter was consider by Officers and the Executive Member/Chief Officer were advised that the <b>'good neighbour'</b> scheme was not appropriate. This was accepted by the Executive Member/Chief Officer.
13	Greater incentive to achieve an increase in under-occupation transfers; consideration to be given to increasing the financial reward and introducing other forms of assistance to tenants.		AT	In Progress	SMT is to receive a paper on the incentives package.
14	The under-occupation scheme to be re-launched with an enhanced publicity campaign to ensure greater public awareness of the scheme.		AT	In Progress	SMT to receive a paper on the proposed re-launch of the incentives package.
15	An overall publicity and education campaign is to be undertaken with staff and residents to launch the policy. A leaflet is produced and made available in major community languages.		AT	In Progress	SMT to receive a paper on publicity and education proposals for decision and sign off.
16	The Scrutiny Review Panel to be given the opportunity to comment on the draft leaflet produced.		NL	Complete	Consultation has been completed on draft leaflet and it is being finalised
17	The leaflet to be produced at the same time as the Home Connections Scheme is launched.		NL	In progress	The leaflet will be available shortly after Home Connections goes live.

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Progress
18	The re-housing service, IT Department and the Legal service, in collaboration, to develop a protocol that achieves a balance between the needs of the Council to alleviate homelessness and the rights of the applicants under the Data Protection Act	08.10.06	NL	In progress	Proposed wording on sharing data is with Legal and with Rehousing Manager.  There is hundreds of existing HR Application form. Any change would be longer term.
19	An Action Plan, including the operating instructions (procedures) and progress report to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006.	01.11.06	NL	Complete	Procedures still being written. Not proposed to share drafts with panel. Final versions will be provided.
20	The Action Plan for the Housing Scrutiny to include feedback from <i>Connexions Direct</i> .	18.12.06	NL	Complete	Council has duty to 16/17 year olds and will respond to them through P&O service.
21	The review of the Housing Register be undertaken as a matter of urgency and the Rehousing Service to ensure that the register is reviewed on a regular basis.	08.10.06	PH	Complete	The review of the Housing Register has been completed and a new register successfully established. Problems with vulnerable applicants addressed and checks undertaken.
22	A modelling impact assessment of the applicants on the Housing Register be carried out before the implementation of the policy, ensuring that applicants are re-pointed using the new Lettings Policy, to ascertain whether the aims of the new policy have been achieved.	03.10.06	NL/AT/PH/JN	Complete	A large amount of modelling has taken place. Evidence strongly points to the proposed pointing scheme being appropriate to meet the Allocations Quota. This will be reviewed every 3 months.

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Progress
23	An explanation regarding Homes for Haringey be included in the new Lettings Policy, to enable applicants to distinguish clearly between the Council's strategic housing services and Homes for Haringey.	01.10.06	NL	Complete	The Lettings Policy has been updated to include the amendments approved by the Executive Committee on the 12/09/06.
24	Equalities Impact Assessment	01.10.06	NL	Complete	The EIA was signed off by Head of Housing on 28.09.06. It has been circulated to Housing Scrutiny review members.
25	Prevention and Options. Member visits to observe service	01.11.06	NL/MB	Complete	A number of Scrutiny Members visited and spent time looking at the new service in operation.
26	Changes to the Lettings Policy	07.12.06	NL	Complete	A number of minor changes have taken place. A final changes list will be available to the meeting. The changes do not effect the policy.

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Status	Progress
24	The new Lettings Policy document be produced incorporating amendments agreed by the Executive Committee.	02.10.06	NL	Complete	The Lettings Policy has been updated to include the amendments approved by the Executive Committee on the 12/09/06.
25	That agreement on the final points scheme be delegated to the Director of Social Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and that the final version be reported to the Executive		JH	Complete	The pointing scheme to be submitted to Director of Social Services and Executive Member for Housing.
26	That the new pointing scheme be reviewed, and amended, as appropriate by the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing as required to meet the Council's objectives.		JH	Complete	The pointing scheme and the Allocations Quota will be reviewed every three months to ensure it is meeting the objectives of the new policy.

#### Action Plan Management

The Action Plan was produced on the 08.12.06 by Nigel Long.

Haringey's logo

## Equalities Impact Assessment

Directorate : Social Services

Date:28<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Business Unit: Housing Strategy and Needs

**Title: Lettings Policy.**

### 1. The Aims of the function

- To put in place a robust policy for the letting of all Council and Housing Association homes in the Borough.
- To establish a Lettings Policy that meets good practice and legal requirements.
- To establish a policy that clearly explains how priority is given to different housing needs.
- To include alongside the policy a points scheme that ensures these priorities are met in a fair and transparent way.
- To operate the Lettings Policy as part of a range of new services and policy initiatives to improve choice in social housing, and meet key Council and Government objectives.

### 2. Relevant information and evidence

- The proposed Lettings Policy being considered by Haringey Council's Executive Committee on the 12 September 2003 is an important policy for the Council.
- It sets out how the Council ensures all Council and Housing Association properties are let on the basis of housing need.
- How priority is given to housing need as set out in the Lettings Policy. The policy plays an important role in meeting the Council's wider commitments to tackling inequality.
- The number of dwellings within the borough covered by the policy are 16,462 council and 12,738 housing association.

***Background on priority lets:***

Housing authorities must ensure that reasonable preference is given to the following categories of people, as set out in s167 (2) of the 1996 Act:

- (a) people who are homeless this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any housing authority or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

Housing authorities will need to be able to demonstrate that, overall, reasonable preference for allocations has been given to applicants in all the reasonable preference categories.

Section 167(2) gives housing authorities the power to frame their allocation schemes so as to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs.

Examples of people with urgent housing needs to whom housing authorities should consider giving additional preference within their allocation scheme include :

- (a) those owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent re-housing, including:
- (b) those who need to move because of urgent medical reasons.

The Council's Lettings Policy covers all Council housing lettings and letting to housing association homes where a nomination agreement exists.

***Gender***

The Housing service does not currently monitor lettings by gender. We must start monitoring by January 2007 as set out under the Monitoring and Reviewing arrangements section.

***Age***

We must start monitoring by January 2007 as set out under the Monitoring and Reviewing arrangements section.

***Disability***

The Housing Service monitors lettings by disability. However the number of lettings is so low as to make data statistically unreliable.

***Ethnicity***

Table 1 shows the close correlation between lettings and the wide range of ethnic groups living in the Borough.



Table 1: Waiting List by Ethnicity

Rolling 12 Months Report							
Waiting List by Ethnicity		Target = Difference no more or less than 10%					
Feb-06							
	Census	Waiting List		Lets		Comparison	
Ethnicity		No. of Cases	% of Waiting List	No. of Lets	% of Total Lets	Expected lets from WL	Difference
Bangladeshi/UK Bangladeshi	1.37%	111	1.73%	7	0.88%	14	-0.85%
Black African	9.18%	1629	25.34%	198	24.94%	201	-0.41%
Black British	1.35%	170	2.64%	21	2.64%	21	0.00%
Black Caribbean	9.5%	1090	16.96%	167	21.03%	135	4.08%
Black Caribbean and White	1.48%	54	0.84%	13	1.64%	7	0.80%
British Asian	1.55%	13	0.20%	1	0.13%	2	-0.08%
Chinese	1.13%	28	0.44%	3	0.38%	3	-0.06%
East African Asian	-	25	0.39%	5	0.63%	3	0.24%
Indian or UK Indian	2.85%	44	0.68%	8	1.01%	5	0.32%
Mixed Asian and White	1.08%	13	0.20%	2	0.25%	2	0.05%
Mixed Black	-	8	0.12%	2	0.25%	1	0.13%
Mixed Black African/White	0.72%	33	0.51%	4	0.50%	4	-0.01%
Mixed Other	1.28%	40	0.62%	5	0.63%	5	0.01%
Other Asian	-	222	3.45%	26	3.27%	27	-0.18%
Other Black	-	44	0.68%	8	1.01%	5	0.32%
Other White	-	110	1.71%	15	1.89%	14	0.18%
Other White European	-	499	7.76%	57	7.18%	62	-0.58%
Pakistani / UK Pakistani	0.95%	49	0.76%	2	0.25%	6	-0.51%
Traveller	-	4	0.06%	0	0.00%	0	-0.06%
White British	45.28%	1012	15.74%	128	16.12%	125	0.38%
White Greek Cypriot	-	88	1.37%	9	1.13%	11	-0.24%
White Irish	4.3%	197	3.06%	22	2.77%	24	-0.29%
White Kurdish	-	428	6.66%	41	5.16%	53	-1.49%
White Turkish	-	207	3.22%	22	2.77%	26	-0.45%
White Turkish Cypriot	-	310	4.82%	28	3.53%	38	-1.30%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>6428</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>794</b>	

### 3. Assessment of Likely Impact

Having reviewed the points allocations scheme they fall in line with current legislation on prioritising housing needs. The points scheme is not directly discriminatory and all points allocated are done on a justified priority need approach. Please see background for details of cases where we are legitimately able to give points on priority need.

#### *Ethnicity*

Points are not awarded based on ethnicity. The lettings policy will still have points awarded on a housing needs basis. The scheme now has greater emphasis on reducing overcrowding, it is therefore likely that some groups will be indirectly discriminated against as particular ethnic groups may be overcrowded to a greater or lesser extent. This is justified under 'reasonable preference' under the homelessness act which gives preference to people in certain categories see above.

As required by legislation the policy sets out how additional points would be awarded if a resident is experiencing harassment, this applies to harassment based on race.

Under the CRE guidelines the Council needs to ensure that one group does not receive a better standard of housing than others. The service was unable to provide information on the standard of housing by ethnicity (please advise over responsibility, Haringey or HfH) so we are unable to establish which groups are receiving 'better' homes.

The Service needs to ensure monitoring standard/type of property (e.g. flat, house, garden) and area by ethnicity.

The Lettings Policy is available in the 6 community languages and will be made available to applicants by them contacting the Translation service:

**FREEPOST  
Haringey Council  
Translation and Interpretation Services  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, River Park House  
225 High Road London N22 8HQ**

#### *Disability*

The proposed Lettings Policy places a high emphasis upon tackling the needs of disabled people and they are likely to receive points based on medical need. The service was unable to provide monitoring information by disability, it is therefore difficult to ascertain what the present rate of allocation to those with a disability.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) people with a disability should not be waiting disproportionately longer for a property than able bodied people, monitoring therefore needs to be introduced to ensure that this does not occur.

The Housing Needs Service also needs to introduce monitoring of all adapted homes to ensure that they are let to people with disabilities

The Lettings policy is available in different formats including:

- In LARGE PRINT     On Disk     On Audio tape     In Braille

### ***Gender***

The Lettings Policy does not directly award points on the basis of gender. The service is unable to provide information on lets by gender.

The policy and points scheme may give priority to:

males under the medical requirement priority as typically males suffer from mental health related problems more (MIND).

to females where points are allocated on the basis of number of dependents as women are more likely to be sole carers of dependents (ERSC, 90% 2004)

This is justified under the 'reasonable preference' priority scheme.

To ensure that males/females are not allocated properties disproportionate to their need the reason for points allocation by gender would to be collated and monitored.

### **Sexuality**

As required by legislation the policy sets out how additional points would be awarded if a resident is experiencing harassment, this applies to harassment based on sexual orientation.

Same sex couples are also given succession rights.

### **Age**

The Lettings Policy does give priority to older people and reflects the priority Older People's Services gives to supported housing. This need arises as a consequence of associated ill health or disability rather than because of age.

Teenage parents are supported through semi independent housing options (with the support from Supported Housing).

### **Religion/belief**

The lettings policy As required by legislation the policy sets out how additional points would be awarded if a resident is experiencing harassment, this applies to harassment based on religion.

The council does have links with housing associations that have experience in housing groups from different religions.

### **All strands**

Complaints and appeals

These will need to be monitored by the six equality strands where available.

***Consultation***

The Housing Service has carried out extensive consultation with a wide range of people and organisations. This has included a survey of all 25000 people on the Housing Register, a Tenant Consultative Forum presentation and a one day conference of voluntary sector organisations. Focus Groups have been held with hard to reach and BME residents e.g. Turkish speakers. The focus group supported the policy. They had concerns about under-occupied property. The Lettings Policy seeks to address this through points scheme. Transfers receive more points if they are under-occupying their home.

All local housing associations and BME voluntary sector organisations have been consulted as have disability, older peoples organisations. Concerns were raised about the need to support vulnerable adults under the new Choice Based Lettings

***Domestic Violence***

The Lettings Policy gives priority to Domestic violence in line with the statutory priority that requires it to be considered as an ‘Additional Preference.’ It is proposed to strengthen the this area.

**2. Consideration of Alternatives**

***Domestic Violence***

The importance of responding to Domestic Violence is reflected in the points scheme. It is proposed, given the priority Members give to tackling Domestic Violence to make this one of the top 5 priorities in the policy. The proposed pointing scheme already gives Domestic violence a high level of points.

***Vulnerable People***

Following consultation on the Lettings Policy the emphasis upon meeting the needs of vulnerable people was increased. The need to respond to people with mental health and learning disability challenges was identified as was the need to respond to people with ‘complex needs’; that is people with a range of health or disability related challenges.

**5. Monitoring and reviewing arrangements**

The Housing Service will introduce a range of measures to improve the monitoring of the lettings service in addition to the existing arrangements.

These are set out in the Action Plan at Annex A. The Action Plan will be monitored by the Council's Executive Committee.

**6. Publishing the Impact Assessment**

The Housing Service will make copies of the agreed EIA available on the website and copies will be displayed in Housing Offices.

This Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out by:

Name: **Nigel Long**

Designation: **Policy and Procedures Manager**

Contact details: **0207-489-4454**

**Nigel.long@haringey.gov.uk**

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Approved by: **Julian Higson**      Designation: **Head of Housing**

Date: **28 September 2006**



# Lettings Policy

## Equalities Impact Assessment Action Plan

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Progress
1	<b>Ethnicity:</b> Introduce monitoring targets for all lettings	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
2	<b>Ethnicity:</b> Introduce monitoring of household size	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
3	<b>Disability:</b> Introduce monitoring targets for all lettings	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
4	<b>Disability:</b> Introduce monitoring of household size	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
5	<b>Disability:</b> Introduce monitoring of adapted homes to ensure let to disabled.	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
6	<b>Age:</b> Introduce monitoring targets for all lettings	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
7	<b>Age:</b> Introduce monitoring of household size	31.01.07	Greg Carter	
8	Monitor waiting time for all equalities groups	31.01.07	Denise Gandy	
9	Produce Monitoring report bi-annually.	31.01.07	Denise Gandy	
10	Ensure that the new build housing programme includes partnership arrangements with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Providers.		<b>Rupert Brandon</b>	The current development programme includes the provision of specialist accommodation provided by BME housing associations.
11	Ensure that housing association partners are aware of their equality responsibilities within the nominations process		<b>Hitesh Tailor</b>	

No	Action	Target Date	Lead Officer	Progress
12	Equality proof new Lettings procedures	01.11.06	Nigel Long	
13	Develop further consultation with BME and Equality and Diversity organisations		Denise Gandy	
14	Review the complaints and appeals arising from the new Lettings Policy.			



**(DRAFT)Your, choice, your move**  
**Haringey's new Choice Based Lettings Scheme**

This booklet is a guide to:

**\*Home Connections – Haringey Councils new Choice Based Lettings scheme**  
**\*help you understand the new housing points system**

This booklet also has a points guide to help you work out how many points you should have – this will inform you of the types of property you can bid for.

Previously to our new choice based lettings scheme - the main option to get a permanent home with the council was to get put on the Haringey Council waiting list and wait for a home to be offered to you.

Now we are going to give you the choice to decide on the home you want to live on and where you want to live.

You do this by bidding for the property you like. You can bid in **3 ways**:

- 1. By going on to [www.haringey.gov.uk/housing](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/housing) and clicking on the links to Home Connections. You will need to have a user ID and PIN to bid.**
- 2. Or call 020 7974 2696 – you will be taken through 7 steps with our voice recognition system.**
- 3. You can even bid by using your mobile phone.**

You can get more information on bidding by logging on to [www.haringey.gov.uk/housing](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/housing), sending an email to [lettings@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:lettings@haringey.gov.uk) or calling our helpline on 020 8489 1000.

Everyone on Haringey's housing register should have been sent a breakdown of their accumulated points.

If you haven't received your points or want to register in our housing list, please telephone **020 8489 1000** or pop into a customer services centre and pick up a Home Connections leaflet.

While Choice Based Lettings scheme is open to everyone on the council's housing register, the council will give priority to those of you:

- Who live in severely overcrowded properties
- Who have serious medical problems
- Are Vulnerable adults
- Older People
- Are victims of domestic violence

As long as customers have been allocated points, they can bid for a property.

The five bidders with the highest number of points will be able to visit the empty property and the bidder, with the most points, gets the property, subject to checking the details of their bid and their circumstances.

### ***The Points***

The points' scheme below covers all the categories of points available to customers.

We want to encourage you to understand your points and work out how many you should have by using our points guide – so you can have an idea of which properties you can realistically aim to bid for.

But it is only a guide - the final decision on your points total will be undertaken by the London Borough of Haringey.

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## **Haringey Council points guide – this will help you work out how many points you are entitled to**

You can use this to have an idea about what size or type of property you can bid for with our Home Connections scheme.

### **If you are homeless = 100 - 350 points**

**Or:**

- ***Homeless at home with one child = 150 points + 4 points per month***
- ***Homeless at home with two children = 200 + 4 per month***
- ***At home with one child and officially homeless = 150 points + 4 points per month***
- ***At home with two children and officially homeless = 200 + 4 per month***
- ***Using mediation, family support or foster carers to try sort out domestic problems in the family home = 50- 100 points***

### **Temporary Accommodation**

- ***If you are currently living in temporary accommodation and waiting to be re-housed in private accommodation = 48 points per year or 4 per month***

## Abuse

- If you have to move from your current residence due to domestic violence or harassment = 100 points
- Anyone who is living under a witness protection programme due to violence or harassment = 250 points

## Children

- Children and young people who are unable to leave hospital due to concerns about their safety in the parental role = 400 points
- Any child on the Child Protection Register = 250 points
- Relationship breakdown that has led to a tenant needing to find new accommodation = 50 points

## Overcrowding

- If you have to live in accommodation where you have to share a bathroom, WC, kitchen or living room = 20 – 30 points
- Having to share bedrooms, or where there is not enough bedrooms to accommodate everyone actually living in the household = 100 – 400 points
- On the other hand, if you have a larger property which no longer suits your needs, points will be

awarded if you move to a smaller property = 200  
– 400 points

### Health

- Living in unsanitary conditions where you might be exposed to unclean water supply, sewage issues and/or insect or vermin infestation = 200 points
- If you have mental health issues, drug or alcohol dependency, a learning disability or other complex needs – we are here to support you = 150 points

### Medical

- If you have serious/urgent medical needs = 300 points

### Waiting list

- We want to re-house you as quickly as possible, but other circumstances might have meant that you have been longer on the waiting list than we would have = 24 points per year
- If major work cannot be done to your accommodation without you being moved to another property = 300

If you have been living in care = 200 points

Or:

An ex- offender = 150 points

***Write your total here:***

***Once you have ‘assessed’ your situation – add up your points total below.***

***Our Home Connections booklet will tell you in more detail about what type of property you can bid for.***

FRAUD DISCLAIMER TO GO HERE

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