

THE EXECUTIVE

20 JANUARY 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

REHOUSING FROM SERVICE TENANCIES	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report concerns terms and conditions for employees and policy matters relating to meeting housing need, which are reserved to the Executive.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>Due to recent changes in the Housing and Health Department, a number of staff have achieved promotion or no longer need to occupy a specific property to carry out their work activities. The current policy does not cover this situation. This report proposes changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy in respect of staff occupying property in order to carry out their work (Service Tenancies).</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree to provide re-housing to employees leaving their posts that required them to occupy specific properties.</p> <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>This is in order to free up properties for occupancy by a new service tenant and / or to provide independent accommodation for staff who are no longer required to hold a service tenancy.</p>	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's overall housing allocations policy covers a range of policy areas in relation to entitlement to rehousing and sets the Council's policy framework for both entitlement to rehousing and appropriate priority for the various needs groups.
- 1.2 Although the Council has recently agreed to introduce a new approach to housing allocations called More Choice in Lettings (MCIL), this will still need to sit within a framework which determines access to rehousing and priority awarded. All of these categories will need to be reviewed as part of the introduction of MCIL.
- 1.3 In respect of the existing policy on rehousing staff from service tenancies this matter is being brought to the Executive's attention at an early stage due to changes within the Housing and Health service, which have identified the need for urgent changes to address a number of rehousing matters.

- 1.4 The Council's policy on re-housing staff from service tenancies only addresses retirements, resignations and dismissals.
- 1.5 As a result of changes in the Housing and Health Department a number of staff have achieved promotion or no longer need to occupy a specific property to carry out their work activities.
- 1.6 This situation is not covered by the current policy, as historically there has been little or no movement of staff from tied tenancies to other posts within the Council. However, due to the extensive changes within Housing and Health, Wardens and caretakers are achieving promotion or changes in their working circumstances, which requires them to vacate their service tenancies.
- 1.7 The introduction of the new caretaking and cleaning service for housing estates no longer requires the staff to be resident and a significant number have requested rehousing.
- 1.8 Current policy for retiring staff allows staff with 5 years or more continuous service consideration for a flat or a house, taking into account any medical needs.

2. Policy Proposal

- 2.1 Any member of staff who no longer needs to occupy a property to carry out their work activities should be provided with suitable alternative housing.
- 2.2 The aim is to provide alternative housing to release the service tenancy for a new occupant or to move the employee 'off site' to provide respite from out of hours call out when not on duty.
- 2.3 However, it also needs to be recognised that the Council is under considerable pressure to provide housing for a range of different needs. The pressure to meet the need is such that the Council has to consider the types of properties that it can make available to staff moving into new roles.
- 2.4 The new proposal is that housing offers are made available from:
 - LBBD Housing Stock
 - RSL Nomination
 - Homes Nomination
- 2.5 An employee with less than 5 years service will only be offered flatted accommodation. Residents with more than 5 years service will be given consideration for accommodation of their choice.
- 2.6 Due to housing pressures, size of accommodation will be restricted to the specific needs of the existing family, consistent with current property size guidance in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.
- 2.7 When housing options are being discussed with the member of staff consideration will be given as to whether the Council is likely to be able to meet their rehousing needs within 3 months. If this is not possible, the Council will not be able to commit

to these choice options. In this event, the member of staff will be required to expand their options. If the member of staff is not co-operative the Council will seek possession if the property is still required as a service tenancy. A maximum of 2 offers of accommodation will be made available.

- 2.8 In the circumstances where the accommodation is needed for another member of staff, action will be taken to secure possession should both offers be refused. In the instance where there is a request for a move, if 2 offers are refused the application will be suspended for 1 year.
- 2.9 Employees with less than 5 years continuous service will be eligible only for flatted accommodation. The same criteria in respect of offers of accommodation will apply.
- 2.10 Very high priority will be awarded to re-housing employees where the accommodation is needed for another employee, in respect of creating a further service tenancy for an employees to carry out their work duties. A typical example is a warden of a sheltered housing complex.
- 2.11 High priority will be awarded to those staff wishing to leave their service tenancies due to changes in service delivery. An example of this is the new estate caretaking and cleaning service where the existing staff are no longer required to be resident and new staff are not being provided with service tenancies
- 2.12 This policy framework is consistent and appropriate in addressing the rehousing needs of Council employees who are local residents and who are eligible for rehousing. This policy proposal does not provide enhanced priority for employees but places them in the same position as any other resident of the borough that is seeking rehousing.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 These policy proposals are considered to be an enhancement to the current arrangements.
- 3.2 Consultation has taken place with:
 - Director of Education, Arts and Libraries
 - Director of Social Services
 - Director of Leisure and Environmental Policy
 - Director of Corporate Strategy
- 3.3 Any comments received will be reported verbally to the Executive.

Background Papers

Housing Allocations Policy

Reports to the Executive relating to More Choice in Lettings