

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, 23 April 2014 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Marsden (in the chair), Councillors Castle, M Coleman, Collins, Fairhead, Field, Shrimplin, J Smith and Wright.

Councillor B Coleman attended as substitute for Councillor Hacon and Councillor Fox attended as a substitute for Councillor Robinson-Payne.

Councillor Linden attended by invitation.

Mr R Read (Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods), Mr R Hodds (Cabinet Secretary) and Ms T Slater (Service Manager Strategic Housing and Housing Options).

1. NOTICE OF CALL IN - REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

(Councillor M Coleman declared a personal interest in the following item in her capacity as a Member of the Community Housing Board and was allowed to speak and vote on the item)

The Committee was informed that the Call In on the Review of the Allocations Scheme had been exercised by Councillors Fox, J Smith and Sutton on the following grounds:-

1. Application of 1 year claim backdating to those who can prove 24 hours per week work irrelevant criteria to tenancy consideration.
2. Application of 1 year claim backdating to those who can prove 24 hours per week work not expected to be applied in many cases; policy therefore unnecessary.
3. Application of 1 year claim backdating to those who can prove 24 hours per week works risks compounding inequality of reasons that may underlying non-working/short working status on grounds of protected characteristics e.g. age of disability, additional risk of discrimination by association to a protected characteristic such as applied to a full-time carer in receipt of carers allowance.
4. Application of 2 choice limit to accommodation offers and introduction of 3 month geographical preference to offers surplus to requirements due to existing application review processes.

The Committee considered the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods tabled report which detailed the responses to the reasons for the Call In as outlined above.

In discussing the report, Councillor Fox revised the issue of seasonal work and the impact this has on the Allocations Scheme. The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods agreed to give this issue further consideration and whether it can be reflected in the revised scheme. The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods assured Members that the new allocations policy would be continually monitored to ensure fairness and that those most in need are not negatively impacted.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Committee agree to take no further action, and that the Cabinet decision on the Allocations Scheme be implemented.
- ii) That the Allocations Scheme be included in the Scrutiny Committees Work Programme for 2014/15 for review of its operation in six months time.

The meeting ended at: 19:10