

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**HOUSING (ALLOCATIONS) SUB-GROUP**  
**TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER, 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**ESPERANCE ROOM**

PRESENT:: Councillors: Foley, D. (Chairman)  
Burnett, G.  
Cooper, Miss. J.  
Hoare, M.W.A.

Officers: J. Baldasera, Strategic Housing and Tenancy Services  
Manager  
S. Stuart, Allocations and Supported Housing Team

Leader  
J. Hunt, Senior Committee Officer

**1. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. S.M. Cartwright.

**2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members**

No further declarations were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests.

**3. Notes**

The Notes of the meeting held on 11 October, 2015 were agreed.

**4. Proposals – Housing Allocations**

Janet Baldasera distributed an amended version of the Housing Services Allocations Policy and gave a presentation on the Allocations Policy Review – Proposals for amendment.

Members of the Group discussed areas around out of area applications, irrecoverable debts and how the law worked, the idea of a social media campaign to attract people on the waiting list to low demand properties and the ways in which people could view properties that the Council currently had available.

The Group agreed the following proposals:

Out of Area Applicants

Applicants who meet the reasonable preference criteria but who have not lived in the District continuously for the last 12 months will be placed in Band 4. Applicants must meet at least one of the “Local Connection” criteria to be considered for allocation of a property.

They must have:

- Previously lived in the District for 3 out of the past 5 years, or
- Have permanent\* employment within the District, or
- Have close family members\* who have lived in the District for at least 5 years, and where there has been frequent contact, commitment or dependency immediately prior to the date of application, or
- Have a high or medium social need\* to live in the area

### Arrears – Statute of Limitations

#### Qualifications

All applicants and transferring tenants who owe statutorily recoverable former tenant arrears are excluded including applicants who have had their rent arrears included in a Debt Relief Order

All applicants and transferring tenants who owe irrecoverable former tenants arrears will be placed in Band 4 and will only be eligible for higher band or allocation of a property when the arrears are cleared.

In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to review the ineligibility for higher band award and/or allocation of a property if a substantial part of the irrecoverable former tenant arrears has been cleared and adequate arrangements made to clear the remainder.

#### Band 4

Statutorily Irrecoverable Arrears – Applicants who have former tenants arrears but are now irrecoverable being outside the statute of limitations

#### Under-Occupation/Bedroom Tax

Social Housing Tenants who are downsizing in arrears will be placed in Band 1 provided that:

- County Court action has not commenced in respect of their current tenancy
- a current arrears payment plan is in place

and

- the tenant has paid in accordance with the plan for a period of 13 weeks without a missed payment

Downsizing social housing tenants with arrears who do not meet the criteria in 6.7(b) will be placed in Band 4, will not be eligible for an offer of accommodation and be subject to the Council's rent arrears recovery procedures.

### Low Demand Properties/Communal Flats

Property Eligibility – two bedroom flats and one bedroom in a mature block

Extending eligibility to:

Out of area Applicants – Applicants who meet the reasonable preference criteria but who have not lived in the District continuously for the last 12 months will be placed in Band 4. Applicants must meet at least one of the “Local Connection” criteria to be considered for allocation of a property.

Single people or couples who are in permanent employment\* and meet the affordability requirement under the Tenancy Sustainability Strategy.

\*permanent employment is defined as a minimum of 24 hours on a contract of paid employment which is intended to last for at least 12 months.

### Tenancy Sustainability – Pre-Tenancy

#### Making an Application

Applicants may be required to attend a pre-tenancy meeting as part of the Council's Tenancy Sustainability Strategy to prepare for a tenancy. Applicants who may be required to attend include those who are:

- applying for their first tenancy
- had rent arrears
- other tenancy problems
- affordability issues
- referral from other services

Failure to engage in a tenancy preparation programme may result in offers of accommodation being withheld or withdrawn.

Applicants will be required to pay rent via direct debit and make at least one week's rent payment in advance on sign up. Only in exceptional cases where all efforts through the tenancy preparation programme to make arrangements to set up a direct debit and/or make an advance payment have been exhausted will consideration be given to payment by other means.

Offers of property will be withdrawn where:

Applicants are deemed incapable of sustaining a tenancy

### Homelessness Applicants – Suitable Properties EOI

#### Principles

Applicants will only be considered for an allocation of a property by making an Expression of Interest, or if homeless, additionally through Expression of Interest for suitable accommodation made by the Housing Options Team.

The proposals from the Housing (Allocations) Sub-Group would be taken forward to the next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee on 30 November, 2016. Should the Committee agree with the proposals, they would then be forwarded to Cabinet for agreement.

(The meeting concluded at 4.40 p.m.).