

Cabinet - 3 November 2020

Recommendations from the People and Health Overview Committee meeting held on 27 October 2020

Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy 2021-2025

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Executive Director of People - Adults which outlined the process in drafting the new Dorset Housing Allocations Policy.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety introduced the report highlighting the need for the Council to adopt a Housing Allocations Policy by 2022 and the consultation undertaken. The new Policy had been drafted with the assistance of the Executive Advisory Panel and would replace those of the previous sovereign Councils.

The Policy is established to ensure the allocation of tenancies is carried out fairly and in accordance with the law. It aims to ensure fair and efficient management of the stock and a scheme that is accessible to those households in housing need. The wider questions on how to respond to housing need are being addressed in current work towards a Homelessness Strategy and an overarching Housing Strategy. The new Policy would reflect the Corporate Strategy. The Committee were asked to recommend the Policy and a delegation for the Portfolio Holder to make any necessary minor amendments to the Cabinet.

The Committee then received additional information about the Policy from the Interim Corporate Director for Housing. He explained the approach taken in preparing the policy, the consultation process and the proposed next steps. He highlighted that the Allocations Policy would form part of wider work to develop a Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy for Dorset Council.

The Chairman commented that he had researched the approach taken by other Local Authorities and commended the policy for its thoroughness and quality. Members raised various questions and commented on: monitoring; performance measures; activities taking place; that people should not be given false hope of gaining a property by registering; what "local" meant in the Dorset Council area; the possibility of parish councils having an opportunity to influence allocations in their area; schemes to encourage people to move to more appropriate sized accommodation; whether the financial resource limit of £60K was correct for people to be eligible to apply to the housing register and whether any formula was used to set this level.

The Committee asked that information about how and where the Policy would be monitored and reported should be included and asked for this to be reported to the Committee at a later date.

Members noted that there was to be a quarterly housing briefing to be produced for members, people were given information about alternative accommodation they could pursue, that parish councils could have more input at the planning stage of any developments in their area, and officers would discuss a scheme to incentivise people to move from larger family homes (when their families had moved away) with Registered Social Landlords.

Members thanked officers for the work undertaken in producing the Policy and unanimously:-

Recommended

That the Cabinet endorse the Policy, noting the work of the Executive Advisory Panel and recommend to Full Council:

1. the adoption of the Housing Allocation Policy
2. delegation of authority to the portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety to make minor amendments to the Policy and any amendments necessary to reflect legislative change.

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure Dorset Council has a legally compliant Housing Allocation Policy that meets the needs of the residents.

Decision

That information about how and where the Policy would be monitored and reported should be included and asked for this to be reported to the Committee at a later date.