

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT
DATE	13th APRIL 2010
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	PETE LEONARD
TITLE OF REPORT	HOUSING CASE REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE
REPORT NUMBER	H&E/10/036.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from this Committee to amend the protocol; for referring housing cases to the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the committee approve the following protocols :-

1. Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and Members of Parliament (MP) wishing to refer a case on behalf of a constituent to the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee must in future advise the constituent to contact their Councillor who may refer the case if the Councillor sees fit.
2. All referrals to the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee by Council officers must be checked and approved by the Head of Service Housing and Community Safety to ensure that all the necessary criteria are met

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report

4. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

4.1 The Community Plan sets out our vision for the future of the City. Our vision is a City which is Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking, an even better place to live and work, where people can expect high quality services that meet their needs. The current policy aims to fulfil the following Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking objectives:

- Enhance the total environment in social housing areas

4.2 The Council's Single Outcome Agreement is contained within the Community Plan update 2008 and the Single Outcome Agreement 2008/11. This links national outcomes with local outcomes and priorities that in turn support the administrations policy document. Links are also made with the Corporate Business Plan. Those specifically related (either directly or indirectly) to the current letting arrangements are:

- Continue to work to maintain people in sustainable tenancies, providing support to those who become homeless – Corporate Business Plan 2010-2013
- Ensuring value for money – Corporate Business Plan 2010-2013
- Addressing the needs of more vulnerable communities with often complex and varied needs e.g. gypsy travelers; homeless; prisoners; young people leaving care – Corporate Business Plan 2010-2013
- Improve the overall health and wellbeing of the people of Aberdeen City through focusing on the factors that are harmful to health and wellbeing and in particular by supporting those most vulnerable – Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12
- Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas – Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12
- Children and young people are protected from abuse, neglect, harm by others (and self) at home, at school or in the community - Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12
- Collectively reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour (including racist incidents) - Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12
- Aberdeen City residents have access to quality, affordable housing - Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

5.2 There are no direct personnel or resources implications arising from the report,

5.3 There is no direct property implications arising from the report

- 5.4 There are no direct equipment implications arising from the report
- 5.5 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the report

6. REPORT

Background

The Housing Cases Review Sub Committee is a sub committee of the Housing and Environment committee and was formed to deliberate and make decisions on individual housing cases. Its terms of reference are as follows :-

The Sub Committee Acts with delegated powers to deal with all matters relative to the allocation and management of individual Council houses including the leasing and management of pitches at Clinterty Caravan Site, with the exception of matters which have already been delegated to the Director of Housing and Environment.

Members will note that the terms of reference do not indicate who can refer a case but through custom and practice, Councillors and Council Officers refer cases and, very occasionally, MSP's and MP's have also referred cases.

Council tenants or Homeseekers are assessed for need against predetermined criteria and are given points which prioritise applications on the various housing lists. The allocation policy is comprehensive and includes a range of points' categories for various housing circumstances. The policy is required to be fair and transparent with the aim of housing those in most need.

Aberdeen City Council's allocation policy recognises that very occasionally Council tenants or Homeseekers may have exceptional housing circumstances which fall outwith the points scheme. In these rare situations Council tenants or Homeseekers may be offered re-housing through powers delegated to Senior Officers within the Housing Service. The delegated powers are comprehensive and cover the majority of situations.

The Allocation Policy allows Council tenants or Homeseekers to appeal any decision regarding the assessment of their application or offer of housing. Any appeal is considered by a senior officer in the service. Any constituent also has the right to contact his Councillor and request that they make representations to the service on their behalf regarding any decision relating to their application for housing. Such representations can result in a Councillor requesting their case be referred to the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee. Referral of a case to the Sub Committee should be the highest level of appeal within the Council when all other avenues and options to address the circumstances of the Tenant or Homeseeker have been exhausted.

Councillors have the right to attend the Sub Committee to make representations on behalf of their constituent (subject to the Leasehold and Urban Reform Act).

Referral of cases by MSP's or MP's may however result in the local member being unaware of their constituent's case being heard by the Sub Committee. In order to provide consistency and equity and to ensure that local members are aware of such cases it is recommended that all future referrals to the Sub Committee are initiated by the local member.

Council officers can also submit individual housing cases to the Sub Committee and these referrals are currently required to be authorised by a service manager. In order to provide additional quality assurance and to ensure that it is appropriate to refer the case it is recommended that in future the Head of Service (Housing Management and Community Safety) should scrutinise and approve all officer referrals to the Sub Committee.

7. AUTHORISED SIGNATURE

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8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

