

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Assessment details		
Assessment area		Allocations Policy Review
Date of assessment		August 2018
Directorate and Service		External – Housing Services
Manager		Peter Dosad
Officer conducting assessment		Marie Gerald
Step 1: Scoping the assessment		
1	What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a policy for those seeking housing from the Council (both existing and prospective tenants) with ‘reasonable’ choice and preference over where they live, giving access to good quality affordable housing for those in housing need ▪ Continue to offer applicants an active role in choosing accommodation, taking account of individual circumstances and waiting time ▪ Continue to ensure applicants receive sufficient information to make informed choices about opportunities for re-housing and understand the criteria and processes adopted by the Council ▪ Offer applicants open and fair access to housing, provide choice and recognise diverse needs.
2	Who will be affected?	Anyone that is seeking housing from the Council.
3	How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?	<p>a) There are no national indicators for allocations.</p> <p>b) The responsibilities for preventing homelessness meet the Council’s Corporate Plan strategic aim of ‘facilitating quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, creating strong and self-reliant communities and delivering high quality services to service users’. It also contributes to the Corporate Plan strategic objective of ‘working towards meeting the housing needs of the borough’.</p>
4	Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?	The Council’s Allocations Policy is dictated by the requirements of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and takes account of guidance issued by the Communities and Local Government in 2012. The Localism Act 2011 gave Local Authorities new powers to shape the way in which they approach allocations and manage their waiting list. Further amendments may have to be made following implementation of the

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		<p>Homeless Reduction Act 2017. As a direct result of this, the following is included in the Allocations Policy 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A requirement that applicants need to have lived in the borough for two years to qualify ▪ Bedroom allocation ▪ Introducing the Community Contribution category that gives priority to those in work, volunteer, ex-armed forces personnel, prospective foster carers and those caring for someone ▪ Those who exceed the financial threshold. <p>A further review and report to Cabinet was presented in September 2018.</p>
<p>Step 2: Information collection Note: Equality and Diversity information for Dartford can be found at http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/equality-and-diversity-data</p>		
<p>5</p>	<p>What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment)</p>	<p>Personal information as provided by the applicant. Number of lets Distribution within the bands (currently on the waiting list) Age Disability Gender Ethnic Origin Mobility Income Reasonable preference reasons, i.e. homeless</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings</p>	<p>Consultation on the Allocations Policy 2013 started at the end of 2012 and went into 2013. Further consultation, as part of the 2018 review, was undertaken and included key stakeholders and was targeted at the existing applicants via Kent Home Choice. The findings were that the majority agreed with the changes that needed to be implemented.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?</p>	<p>The 2018 review was intended to fill any gaps found.</p>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

8 Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the General Equality Duty:

- a) tackling unlawful discrimination
- b) promoting equality of opportunity
- c) promoting good relations

NOTES:

- The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration.
 - For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each protected group
 - For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each protected group
 - If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the 'No Impact' box and explain why in question 9
- If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the 'Unknown' box and explain why in question 9

		POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
a	Age	There is ample housing provision for older people. Care leavers are prioritised under the joint stock provision. There is a nomination agreement in place with the YMCA	Restrictions on 18-21 who are in receipt of housing relating benefits. Single persons who are working.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Disability	For applicants with a physical disability and who need an adapted property, assessments are made by the occupational therapist team and suitable properties can be offered direct with support from the OT and a housing surveyor. The Council offers an advocacy service and will bid on behalf of someone if required to. People with a learning disability and who are referred to housing by social services (through the joint stock agreement) are offered the choice of receiving a direct let or through bidding. There is a budget to fund adaptations available.	None identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Gender (including reassignment)	Gender neutral		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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d	Race	The Allocations service adheres to legislation set by the Housing Act 1996 sec 185-187 which determines its duty to immigrants and asylum seekers. A translation service is available for documents when required.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Religion/Belief	Not a consideration	No impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Sexual Orientation	Not a consideration	No impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Pregnancy/Maternity	Not a consideration	Child is only consideration part of the household application once born.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain	Race, religion and sexual orientation information is only asked for on a voluntary basis and is not considered part of the application.			
10	If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups	<p>The Council works closely with KCC's Occupational Therapy department to produce Housing Needs Assessments for applicants that may require an adapted property and that the correct adaptations can be identified. A restructure in this service has meant that assessments are carried out in a clinic and therefore can be unreliable.</p> <p>The Council works in partnership with Kent Home Choice, Porchlight and Kent County Council who have produced their own equality impact assessments.</p>			
11	Any further comments	None.			

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Step 4: Action plan					
12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:					
a) any gaps in information and consultation					
b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated					
a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?					
Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Updates/	Update policy	Policy fit for purpose	April 2018	By Head of Housing	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager
b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?					
Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
U18's, working singles	Ensure the policy is flexible	Improve Options	April 2018	Head of Housing	Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager
Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring					
13	Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?		Strategic Director (External Services)		
14	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the activity or proposal on the equality groups?		By making use of the reporting tool on Locata and reviewing the existing and new policy to ensure it is fit for purpose		
15	When will you review this Customer Access Review?		New assessments will be undertaken whenever there is a significant change to the service or within 18 months whichever is sooner		
Step 6: Final steps					
16	Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Corporate Support Team				
17	If the subject of the Customer Access Review is going to committee, summarise your findings in the committee report				
18	Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded				