

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2019

ALLOCATION POLICY AMENDMENTS INCORPORATING THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report proposes changes to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure the housing elements of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers (approved by Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019 and attached at **Appendix A**) can be delivered in Newark & Sherwood.

2.0 Background

2.1 Members will be aware from the report presented to Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019 that there are approximately 70,000 children in care in England at any one time. Many of these young people when they leave care face serious disadvantage in their lives, compared to their peers. While most young people continue to rely on their families long after they are 18, young people leaving care often do so without the support of a loving family. This is the context for Section 2 of the Children & Social Care Act 2017 which requires each local authority (including District Councils) to publish a Local Offer for its care leavers (18 – 25 years). It should provide information about all the services and support, statutory and discretionary that is available to them from each local authority.

2.2 The Local Offer should include details of local authority services and support that could help care leavers' transition to adulthood and independent living in relation to health and well-being, positive relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.

2.3 Through the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities Chief Executives' Group, the County Council and Borough/District Councils agreed to create one joint single Care Leaver Offer for Nottinghamshire.

2.4 Various work streams were agreed and have been led by appropriate senior officers from the County and District Councils with Newark & Sherwood's Chief Executive providing the link with, and lead from, Nottinghamshire Chief Executives.

2.5 The current number of care leavers in Nottinghamshire (as at 9 January 2019) is provided below by borough/district areas:

| | 18-20 years | 20years + |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Ashfield | 41 | 55 |
| Bassetlaw | 33 | 41 |
| Broxtowe | 4 | 9 |
| Gedling | 14 | 20 |
| Mansfield | 44 | 57 |
| Newark & Sherwood | 33 | 24 |
| Rushcliffe | 15 | 24 |

3.0 Contributions from Borough/District Councils in Respect of the Housing Element

- 3.1 The Borough/District Councils' Chief Executives have expressed 'in principle' support for a number of proposals subject to the relevant approvals of their respective Councils. Set out below is the housing element of the Local Offer that Borough/District Councils will be required to implement.
- 3.2 Borough/District Councils have been working together to secure a consistent offer that gives priority to care leavers within their Housing Allocation Schemes, together with a commitment to help care leavers secure accommodation as quickly as possible (ideally within 8 weeks). However, if emergency accommodation is required, it is proposed that the statutory homelessness process would be triggered and homeless accommodation utilised, as a last resort.
- 3.3 The proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme support priority being given to care leavers to enable them to access longer term housing solutions in a consistent manner across the county. Newark and Sherwood have historically awarded priority to care leavers in our Allocations Scheme and therefore these changes are considered minor amendments to the existing scheme and do not require formal consultation.
- 3.4 The amendments include providing improved banding status if the care leaver has not been able to secure alternative accommodation in the 8 week period and also identifies where, in urgent circumstances, the statutory homeless process is to be triggered.
- 3.5 The document attached at **Appendix B** contains the draft proposed amends which are currently being finalised by the Borough/District Councils housing leads. The housing leads need to ensure that the final wording remains compliant with the law and enables consistent delivery to Nottinghamshire care leavers. It is therefore proposed that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Communities and Environment to approve the final amends to the Councils Housing Allocation Scheme.

4.0 Governance

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council together with Newark and Sherwood Homes (via the cross Council/Company Allocations Project Team) monitor the impact of these proposed amends and include information on this in the annual Allocation Scheme update, presented to this committee.

5.0 Financial Implications - FIN18-19/8305

- 5.1 The costs associated with the proposed Local Offer for Care Leavers and amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme are contained within the Council's allocated revenue budgets.

6.0 Equalities/Implications for Service Users

- 6.1 The Local Offer for Care Leavers and proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme has significant and positive benefits for services users, namely the County's care leavers, who are some of the most vulnerable residents in the County. This new Offer provides a comprehensive guide to all the services and support care leavers are already entitled to, as well as new entitlements that, together, will have a substantial impact on their lives.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) Members approve, in principle, the proposed amends to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme to facilitate priority being given to care leavers in line with the Nottinghamshire Care Leaver offer; and**
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Director - Communities & Environment, to approve the final detail of these amends.**

Reason for Recommendations

To fulfil statutory Corporate Parenting duties, improve lifetime outcomes for Nottinghamshire's care leavers and to ensure the Councils Housing Allocations Scheme remains compliant with the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Children and Social Care Act 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Local offer guidance: Guidance for local authorities (February 2018)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance

For further information on the content of this report please contact Leanne Monger - Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on ext. 5545.

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