



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED  
ALL WARDS**

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION  
AND MEETINGS:  
CABINET AGENDA  
CABINET**

**4th FEBRUARY, 2008  
18th FEBRUARY, 2008**

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## **PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS**

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### **Report of the Report of the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The report proposes delegated authority to be given to the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing to change the Housing Allocations Policy for short periods to respond to pressures on the use of bed and breakfast.

#### **2. Summary**

In 2006/2007 the use of bed and breakfast for homeless families rose dramatically and expenditure was £239k. Various measures were taken to increase homelessness prevention work, and streamline stays in hostels. As a result homelessness decisions fell from 688 in 2006/07 to 371 in the first nine months of 2007/08. Expenditure this year is predicted at £65k. Leicester is in the middle and upper thresholds of its Best Value Indicator and it is important to ensure good performance is maintained (Appendix A).

With pressures on housing growing in the City, it is proposed to give the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing the delegated power, in consultation with Cabinet Lead for Housing to make temporary amendments to the Allocation Policy if the use of Bed and Breakfast begins to rise again. The two measures proposed are:

- Increase points given for Insecure Accommodation to increase the possibility that homelessness can be prevented
- Award Temporary Accommodation points to families earlier during their bed and breakfast or hostel stay.

#### **3. Recommendations**

That the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Housing be given to power to make temporary amendments to the Allocation Policy if the use of Bed and Breakfast starts to rise.

That any amendments made are reviewed monthly.

#### 4. **Report**

- 4.1 The current level of points has been devised and adjusted over time to give a proper balance between meeting the needs and rights of homeless families over other high need groups, and not creating an incentive to make a homeless declaration and go into a hostel.

The proposals will slightly alter the balance between homeless, potentially homeless and the rest of the applicants so they will only be used to avoid bed and breakfast use rising. Bed and Breakfast is very expensive and is not a suitable home for a family.

#### 4.2 **Short Term Amendment of Allocation Policy: Insecure Accommodation Points**

Insecure accommodation points (195 points) are awarded where households are homeless, but still in the home they will have to leave.

These points have helped reduce the number of homeless families who have to actually move into hostels or bed and breakfast, because they get an offer of a Council or RSL or find a private tenancy before they have to leave. To increase the likelihood of a Council or RSL offer the 195 points could be increased to 250 on a temporary basis, to be reviewed monthly. It is proposed that applicants are given one offer from their areas of choice. Last year 200 households were rehoused with these points, all within the year. This proposal will speed up rehousing times for them.

#### 4.3 **Short Term Amendment of Allocation Policy: Temporary Accommodation Points**

When Border House and Kirton Lodge are full, we have to place families in Bed and Breakfast. Families are moved out of Bed and Breakfast when a hostel space becomes available. Length of stay in the hostels is partly a function of families receiving offers of suitable accommodation.

The current allocation policy gives a fairly high priority to homeless families. A typical family in a hostel or bed and breakfast with a homeless approval would have 250 points (plus overcrowding if appropriate). After two months in the hostel they are awarded an additional 190 Temporary Accommodation points to ensure a quick offer and limit the stay.

It is proposed, to award Temporary Accommodation points at the time a Homeless Declaration is taken, to all statutory homeless families in hostels or bed and breakfast, to be reviewed monthly. The points would remain with the family until they left the hostel or bed and breakfast. Homeless families get one reasonable offer and are evicted on refusal, subject to appeal.

While this would 'fast track' these families out of expensive bed and breakfast, it would only increase the overall numbers of homeless families getting rehoused in the year, to the extent that that would happen anyway. Last year there were 880 families' homes for letting. And 180 went to statutory homeless families.

## 5. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

### 5.1 Financial Implications – Rod Pearson

If the recommendations are approved there will be savings to the Department's General Fund budgets. The level of savings is hard to predict but during periods of high demand for temporary accommodation savings could be significant.

### 5.2 Legal Implications

The Council has a discretion to give "additional preference" to particular types of care within the existing "reasonable preference" category. Statutory Homeless is a "reasonable preference" category. The report sets out the anticipated implications of the change on the relative balance between the categories of "reasonable preference" categories.

## 6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities		
Policy		
Sustainable and Environmental		
Crime and Disorder		
Human Rights Act		
Elderly/People on Low Income		

## 7. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Files held by Adults and Housing Department.

## 8. Consultations

There is a requirement to consult RSL's on major changes to the Allocation Policy. It has been Leicester's practice to consult more widely.

While the proposal to award Temporary Accommodation points early may be regarded as a minor change, the proposal to amend Insecure Accommodation points may be regarded as more major particularly if it continued for more than a few months.

It is proposed to introduce the delegated power for use in an emergency, but to simultaneously consult in the usual way and discuss responses to the consultation with the Cabinet Lead.

## 9. Report Author:

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**PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS**

**Performance Measures**

**BV183a**

Measure: Average length of stay of unintentionally homeless families in bed and breakfast.

Performance: Upper threshold. Target 0, actual 5.34 days (down from 10 in 2006/07).

**BV183b**

Measure: Average length of stay of unintentionally homeless families in hostels.

Performance: Middle threshold. Target 84. actual 61.8 (down from 84 last year)

**BV203**

Measure: % change in average number of families in temporary accommodation.

Performance: Upper threshold. Target 2.7, actual - 18% (down from +24.07% in 2006.07).

**BV213**

Measure: Number of households (per 1000 households) where we prevented homelessness.

Performance: Upper threshold. Target 8, actual 10.8 (up from 5 in 2005/06).