

Briefing Note
Proposed Revision to the Allocations Policy
Local Residency Requirement

I. Introduction

A review of the Allocations Policy was carried out in 2010 to address how the policy can support community cohesion, social mobility and the wider regeneration of neighbourhoods.

Between August 2010 and December 2010 an extensive programme of consultation on proposed changes was carried out, including a proposal to give preference to applicants living in the borough.

The response to introducing a residency requirement was positive.

Under current legislation, councils who operate a housing register cannot prevent a person with no local connection from registering for housing. However, the Localism Act will allow councils the flexibility to exclude those who do not reside in the borough from registering for housing.

2. Proposal

This note sets out details of a proposal to introduce, subject to further consultation, a threshold of 5 years' residence in the borough before an applicant can register for assistance with rehousing.

If access to social housing is restricted to those who have lived in the borough for five years, it will help to manage the demand for housing.

In order to comply with legislation and to avoid exceptional hardship, it is proposed that the following exemptions should apply;

- Pan London nominations agreements and other reciprocal agreements
- Homeless and other households who meet the statutory requirements.
- Exceptions at the discretion of the Director of Housing

3. Verification and Assessment

In order to verify that housing applicants meet the residency requirements, allocations staff will require access to a range of records and data sources including: council tax, electoral registration and credit reference agencies such as Experian. The council will consider what procedures should be put in place to address any data protection issues.

4. Consultation

There was extensive consultation carried out with tenants, applicants and stakeholders on a range of proposed changes to the allocation scheme over the period August to December 2010; which included a proposal to prioritise housing for applicants based upon the duration of their residence in the borough.

Although feedback received on the introduction of a local connection provision in the allocation scheme was generally positive, we are undertaking further consultation on this specific proposal.

We are inviting a number of key stakeholders, including existing London Borough of Greenwich Council tenants, equality groups and local Registered Social Landlords (RSL), to consider the proposal that applicants must have lived in the borough for a minimum of 5 years in order to be eligible to register for housing.

Comments and feedback to this proposal should be sent by email to:

5year-residency-consult@greenwich.gov.uk

Consultation starts on **12 January 2012** and ends on **11 February 2012**.

If you have any questions or queries in respect of this matter then you can contact William Sheffield on 0208 921 2686 or by email at:

william.sheffield@greenwich.gov.uk

5. Next Stage

All comments and feedback received during the consultation period will be carefully considered and an Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out.

A summary of the feedback will be published by **28th February 2012** with details of what will happen next. The decision on the proposed amendment to the Allocations Policy will be taken by elected Members in the Cabinet.

If a decision is made to introduce the 5 year residency threshold, it will be applied for all new applications from a date to be agreed by the Cabinet.