

REVIEWS OF HOMELESSNESS DECISIONS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following Council's decision to strengthen the staffing of the homelessness team, Members are requested to authorise the Residential Services Unit Manager to undertake homelessness reviews.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Committee on 2 March 1999, Members considered the legal and operational requirements relating to reviews of homelessness decisions. At that time the Unit Manager was involved on a daily basis in investigating applications and issuing decision notices, and so the report made it clear that reviews would have to be carried out by the Head of Service reporting, if appropriate, to the Member Panel.
- 2.2 Council has recently agreed to strengthen the staffing of the homelessness and housing advice team. When this process is complete, it is anticipated that the Unit Manager will not be so heavily involved in handling homelessness applications personally on a daily basis. This offers the opportunity for him to become involved in assisting with reviews in those cases where he has not had any previous involvement.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the delegations for decision making would remain as at present, so that if Officers are minded to find against an applicant who has requested a review of a homelessness decision, then the matter is automatically referred to the Appeals Panel.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The involvement of the Residential Services Unit Manager in the review process was envisaged when Members considered the pilot Best Value Review on homelessness and housing advice and the staffing implications.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Where a review is carried out by an officer, they must be senior to the officer who made the original decision and must not have been involved in making that decision.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Residential Service Unit Manager be authorised to carry out reviews of homelessness applications under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, but if he is minded not to allow the review then the application be referred to the Appeals Panel for decision. (HHHCC)

G Woolhouse

Head of Housing, Health and Community Care

For further information please contact G Woolhouse on:-

Tel:- 01702 546366 (Ext. 3300)
E-Mail:- graham.woolhouse@rochford.gov.uk