

## **AMENDMENT TO THE LETTING POLICY 2003**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members agreement to revise the points awarded to HM Forces personnel under the new Letting Policy due to be implemented from 31st January 2003.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002 Members agreed the new Letting Policy to be implemented in January 2003, following changes in legislation under the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 2.2 Following Members acceptance a formal twelve week consultation period began with all local RSL's, voluntary organisations, tenants and applicants on the Housing Register being asked to comment on the amendments.
- 2.3 Apart from suggestions for minor amendments to layout, there has been only one request for a major change to the points awarded from the Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency (ESHRA) linked to the British Legion. (See Appendix I.)

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The original Letting Policy awarded 100 points to HM Forces personnel within 12 months of expected discharge provided they had either lived in the District for 5 years in the past or had a close family member living in the District. (See Appendix II for complete rule for Local Connection Points.)
- 3.2 ESHRA have formally requested that we consider granting HM Forces personnel 200 points, the same as residents who have been living in the District for six months or have lived in the District for three years out of the last five.
- 3.3 Following serious consideration of this request it is felt that the Council would want to recognise the particular problems faced by Ex Armed Forces personnel and that it should be seen to be treating them the same as other residents. Thus if they have lived in the District previously for 5 years they should not be penalised for moving away to serve their country.
- 3.4 The revised points for HM Forces personnel is attached (See Appendix III), granting 200 points if they previously lived in the District but maintaining 100 points if they only have a close

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family member living in the District, the same as any other applicant.

- 3.5 The Head of Service does not believe this will have a great impact on the Housing Register but it may help individual families hoping to return to the District.

#### **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The amendment to the new Letting Policy will currently only require manual amendments to points although when the new computer system is installed amendments will have to be made to the computer system.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has the authority under the Homelessness Act to take into account an applicant's local connection with the District and can therefore grant priority to HM Forces personnel.

#### **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVE**

That the revised points level to HM Forces personnel as detailed in Appendix III be adopted. (HRHM)

S. J. Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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#### **Background Papers:**

DTLR-Allocation of Accommodation  
DTLR- Homelessness Strategies A good practice guide  
Homelessness Act 2002

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**Appendix I**

**E-Mail from ESHRA**

Dear Mrs Colwell,

Thank you very much for sending ESHRA a copy of the draft policy document.

As you know the Prime Minister announced in 2001 that he intended to look at

the needs of veterans in the community. To this end he appointed a Minister

for Veteran's Affairs, Dr Lewis Moonie. Dr Moonie set up a number of cross

departmental working groups, one of which is tasked with looking at the

status of veterans in the community. Very often they do not receive the recognition they deserve and Dr Moonie is attempting to effect improvements

wherever possible.

The eligibility for Social Housing of personnel leaving the Services is a frequent bone of contention. Often Service persons living in married quarters have difficulty establishing any necessary residential qualification to be eligible for social housing when leave the Services.

It is noted that the points scheme in Section 9 of the draft policy does recognize this fact. However, it is considered that a retiring Service person, who satisfies the other requirements, should receive the same number

of points as a permanent resident.

To do otherwise might penalize a Service person for serving in Bosnia, at

sea in the Gulf or overflying Iraq.

It is therefore requested that favourable consideration may be given to increasing the points awarded in sub paragraph 2(e) to 200.

The opportunity to comment is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Alun Ryle

**Appendix II**

**Extract from New Letting Policy 2003  
Local Connection and Financial Resources Points**

You are HM Forces personnel within twelve months of expected discharge, occupying service accommodation and have a local family connection by virtue of previous residence of at least 5 years and/or parents, adult child, brother or sister, currently resident in the District and have done so for at least five years **and** have insufficient income, savings or equity in a property to be able to rent privately or purchase a home locally.

= 100 points

**Appendix III**

**Revised points for Ex Armed Forces Personnel  
Local Connection and Financial Resources Points**

You are HM Forces personnel within twelve months of expected discharge, occupying service accommodation and have a local connection by virtue of previous residence of at least 5 years **and** have insufficient income, savings or equity in a property to be able to rent privately or purchase a home locally.

=200 points

You are HM Forces personnel within twelve months of expected discharge, occupying service accommodation and have a local family connection that is to have a parent, adult child, brother or sister currently living in the District and who has done so for a continuous period of at least five years prior to your application **and** have insufficient income, savings or equity in a property to be able to rent privately or purchase a home locally.

= 100 points