

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Housing Appeals and Review Panel **Date:** Wednesday, 13 February 2008

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 2.30 - 2.55 pm

Members Present: Mrs P K Rush (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Richardson and J Wyatt

Other Councillors:

Apologies: R D'Souza

Officers Present: A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)) and R Wallace (Housing Needs Manager)

103. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made pursuant to the Code of Conduct for Members.

105. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below as they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated and the exemption is considered to outweigh the potential public interest in disclosing the information:

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
5	Application 3/2008	1 and 2

106. APPLICATION 3/2008

The Panel considered a review of a decision made by officers under delegated authority regarding the applicants homelessness application. The applicant had previously failed to attend a meeting of Panel when his application was due to be considered and was deferred to this meeting.

The applicant did not attend this meeting and the matter was determined in his absence in accordance with the Panel's terms of reference.

Mr R Wallace (Housing Options Manager) attended the meeting to present the officer's case. Mr R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services) attended the meeting to advise the Panel as required on details of the national and local housing policies relative to the appeal.

The Housing Options Manager introduced the case for the officers. The Panel noted that the applicant could not attend this meeting because he was presently in prison and that he was due to be released on 18 February 2008.

On 12 February 2008, Mr R Wallace, in a telephone call to the South Anglia Housing Association had confirmed that the applicant still had accommodation available with them, although he had built up arrears of £4,000 and they were applying for a Court Order for possession.

The Panel asked the Housing Options Manager the following questions:

It was noted that the applicant had been in care as a child, had any checks been made on this? – No not as yet, it may be that he will become homeless in the future and we will have to make these checks then.

Why did the Housing Association not make any enquiries on this applicant? – It is up to the Local Authority to make the appropriate enquiries and not the Housing Association.

Why did the applicant choose Epping Forest to make his application to? – He has a sister who lives in Sheering which may constitute a connection with the District.

The Chairman indicated that the Panel would consider the matter in the absence of the Housing Options Manager and that the applicant and the Housing Options Manager would be advised in writing of the outcome. The Housing Options Manager then left the meeting.

The Panel then considered all the evidence submitted to them, both in writing and orally.

RESOLVED:

That the officer's decision that the applicant was not homeless or threatened with homelessness be upheld for the following reasons:

- (a) at the time of his application to the Council, the applicant still had a tenancy with a Housing Association for accommodation which was available to him and suitable for his needs;
- (b) there is no evidence to support the claim of the applicant that he had been subject to harassment or other problems which might make the accommodation unreasonable for the applicant to occupy.

CHAIRMAN