

## Decision by Portfolio Holder



**Report reference: HCS-012-2020/21**

**Date of report: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020**

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Housing and Community Services – Councillor H Whitbread

**Author:** Eleanor Green (01992) 564374 **Democratic Services:**

**Subject:** Amendments to Housing Allocations Scheme – Armed Forces Personnel and Supported Housing

**Decision:** That the Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder agrees to make the following change to the Housing Allocations Scheme:

1. Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence will now be exempt from the 7 years local residency criteria.
2. Homeless applicants residing in Brookhaven women's refuge will no longer need to be served with a Section 21 notice in order to be eligible for an allocation outside of the HomeOption Scheme (Appendix 4).
3. Appendix 4 Section 1.4 'Persons Living in Supported Housing' will be amended to remove the list of approved supported housing schemes, enabling the removal and addition of schemes as the need arises from changes to commissioning and legislation, codes of guidance and good practice.

**ADVISORY NOTICE:**

***A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a Pecuniary interest.  
A Portfolio Holder with a non-pecuniary interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.***

I have read and approve/do not approve (delete as appropriate) the above decision:

Comments/further action required: None

Signed: Councillor H Whitbread

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020

*Non-pecuniary interest declared by Portfolio Holder/ conflict of non-pecuniary interest declared by any other consulted Cabinet Member:*

None

*Dispensation granted by Standards Committee:*  
Yes/No or n/a

N/A

**Office use only:**

Call-in period begins: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Expiry of Call-in period: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

***After completion, one copy of this pro forma should be returned to  
Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY***

**Initialed as original copy by  
Portfolio Holder:**

**Reason for decision:**

1. To ensure that the Council can appropriately fulfil its duty towards members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.
2. To allow applicants living in Brookhaven women's refuge to move on to alternative accommodation without the need to serve S21 notice.
3. To ensure that the Council can provide an appropriate move-on pathway for applicants in supported housing.

**Background Report:**

1. On 27 June 2020 (Armed Forces Day) the Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher, announced a new statutory guidance document entitled 'Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces'. The purpose of this new guidance is to ensure access to social housing is improved for members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. The guidance states that former spouses or civil partners of serving personnel should be given extra support when applying for social housing. They will be exempted from rules requiring them to be a local resident before being given social housing in the area, to ensure they are not disadvantaged when applying.

2. Brookhaven women's refuge have changed management from L&Q Housing to Safer Places as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, which has led to several changes in their internal procedures. One such change is that residents of Brookhaven will now be issued with licenses instead of assured tenancies. S21 notices do not apply to licence agreements and, therefore, residents at Brookhaven will not receive S21 notices in future. The Housing Allocations Scheme needs to reflect this change to ensure that residents can still move on when they are ready in the same way as they always did and was the original intention of the Allocations Scheme.

3. Appendix 4 Section 1.4 of the Housing Allocations Scheme is currently very restrictive, as it lists the supported housing schemes that the Council will assist with move-on accommodation. Two of the schemes listed are no longer working in partnership with EFDC and other supported housing provisions, not specified in the list, are. Removing the specified list will allow the Council to more flexibly meet the needs of applicants ready to move on from supported accommodation into independent living.

**Resource Implications:**

None.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

None.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:** N/A

**Consultation Undertaken:** N/A

**Background Papers:**

- Housing Allocations Scheme
- Code of guidance found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces> See point 18.

**Risk Management:** N/A

**Key Decision Reference (Y/N):** N

**Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided as an Appendix to the report.