

Council: 12 July 2011

Non-Executive Business Item – 3.3: Councillor Rowan Turner

Housing Allocations

Council would like to congratulate outgoing Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Richard Cornelius, on the much-needed overhaul of the previously inadequate and unfair Choice Based Lettings housing allocation strategy. Council would like to welcome the new Cabinet Member, Cllr Tom Davey, to his position and wish him well in his new role.

Council believe that Social Housing is a valuable asset, and that its allocation should be the subject of rigorous examination. Council further believes that those that work locally and contribute to the community should be recognised in the allocation process.

Council believes that it is vital that housing allocations reflect the needs of residents, and that those needs are fairly, honestly and openly assessed. Council is pleased that the new system focuses on the needs, and not the "wants" of residents.

Council regrets that Choice Based Lettings was unfair, giving many people the false hope of accommodation they would never receive.

Council warmly welcomes Barnet's new Housing Allocations Scheme, which ensures that those in the greatest need can access Social Housing in the Borough and works to help ensure those who live locally and work locally are assisted. Council is particularly pleased that former members of our brave Armed Forces are recognised in our new policy.

Council also notes that the new scheme is easier for residents to understand and access, and that pilots have indicated that residents in need are housed, on average, 5 days sooner under the new scheme.

Additionally, Council believes that turnover of Social Housing is essential to ensure it continues to fulfil its role to provide shelter to those in greatest need.

Therefore, Council welcomes the statement by the Minister for Housing, Grant Shapps MP that the prosperous should not be living in Social Housing.

Council also welcomes the plans in the Localism Bill to make Social Tenancies more flexible to ensure that Socially Rented homes are there for those that need them.

Therefore Council calls on Cabinet to work to ensure the new Housing Allocations Scheme is implemented successfully and ensures local people in the most need can access local Social Housing. Further, Council calls on the Cabinet Member for Housing to write to the Minister for Housing, Grant Shapps MP welcoming the moves to make Social Housing tenancies more flexible and supporting the Minister's desire to stop the wealthy living in housing meant for those in genuine need.

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1, 31.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.