

Item 21 - Out of Area Placement Policy

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 11)

The Chief Officer People and Places presented the report which proposed the Council's Out of Area Placement Policy.

The demand for both temporary accommodation (TA) and settled accommodation was growing across the district with the number of applicants approaching the Council for resettlement support growing each year. Alongside the increase to local demand, the Council was also competing for both TA and longer-term accommodation with other districts and boroughs including unitary London Authorities, whom have a far more generous budget and funding streams than Sevenoaks District. There was a lack of available move on properties. These pressures led the Council to consider the manner in which resources were allocated based on household composition; community contribution including work and volunteering; and social and welfare needs. The proposed Out of Area Placement Policy set out how the Council sought to work with households based on their priorities, presenting needs and affordability in order to offer the most appropriate accommodation for both TA and through the Private Rented Sector as a longer-term housing solution.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of clarification.

It was confirmed that a financial incentives package was being looked at to encourage landlords to get involved. Private sector offers were encouraged to prevent homelessness and prevent residents getting stuck in temporary accommodation.

Members expressed some concern regarding vulnerable people being moved out of the area. It was confirmed that permanent relocation was possible for those that wanted it but that this was not an ideal solution and could cause problems long-term for residents if they wished to return. It was also confirmed that the Council kept track of temporary accommodation placements. Costs and duration were tracked. In-district accommodation was also encouraged with support being offered to those in temporary accommodation including schooling and transportation needs. Members also raised concern regarding the breadth of choice being provided for those with temporary accommodation needs.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to adopt the Sevenoaks District Out of Area Placement Policy.