

## **P16-002 Housing for the Elderly Policy**

*Approved by the Council on 27 September 2016.*

### **POLICY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to guide the provision and management of the New Plymouth District Council Housing for the Elderly assets and service.

The Council recognises that the number of elderly in the district is increasing and is committed to continuing to provide affordable housing for elderly who meet eligibility requirements.

### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

The Council:

1. Will maintain the current level of investment allowing for further investment based on the self-funding model.
2. Housing for the elderly service is self-funding, whereby the operating, maintenance and capital costs of providing the service are met by rental income and/or other external funding.
3. Will manage Housing for the Elderly in a way consistent with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2010, and other relevant legislation.
4. Property Team will review rents annually in a way consistent with providing affordable housing based on market levels and the self-funding requirements across the portfolio.
5. Officers will consider applications for housing from eligible persons on a consistent and fair basis. Discretion may be used when considering a prospective tenant's suitability and fit. Unsuccessful applicants must be notified of the reasons for declining an application.
6. Officers may offer tenancies to applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria in exceptional circumstances.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To be eligible for Housing for the Elderly, prospective tenants must meet the following criteria:

1. New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.
2. Over 65 years – in the case of a couple, one person must be over 65.
3. Principal source of income is superannuation, war pension or age related benefit.
4. Assets less than \$35,000 for an individual or \$50,000 for a couple.
5. New Plymouth District residents or have family living in the district.
6. Able to live independently (including with assistance from external support).
7. Able to demonstrate is a good tenant with no history of excessive drinking of alcohol, use of recreational drugs or domestic or other violence.

If an individual's circumstances change during a tenancy, notice to vacate may be given. This is based on the needs of the tenant, the interests and wellbeing of other tenants and to ensure Housing for the Elderly is available for those most in need.

## **INVESTMENT/DIVESTMENT**

Opportunities to invest in new or existing housing will be considered within the self-funding model. Any proposed investment must consider issues such as demand, proximity to services, safety, fit-for-purpose and energy efficiency.

Opportunities for social interaction must be considered in any investment. Examples include provision of a common room (in larger developments), encouragement for family and friends to visit, proximity to recreational opportunities and the makeup of the neighbourhood.

Best practice design for disabilities and dementia must be considered in relation to any maintenance, improvements or new builds and should involve consultation with stakeholders with expertise in this area. This is in recognition that tenants may experience disabilities, dementia and/or a decline in mobility during their tenancy.

Divestment is permitted where it is of benefit to the elderly overall and it will assist in reinvestment in more appropriate locations and designs when the costs of bringing properties up to standard are too high. This must be done in accordance with the Approval of Properties for Sale and Method of Sale Policy.

## **LEVELS OF SERVICE**

Management of Housing for the Elderly will include the following:

1. Consideration must be given to the needs of elderly people in the provision of housing such as access, social interaction, proximity to services such as retail and medical, safety and mobility (including pathways and public transport).
2. Referrals to appropriate social or health services will be made if officers become aware of tenants requiring additional assistance such as with financial, health, social or disability issues.
3. Processes must be in place for tenants to feel safe in communicating any concerns they may have with regard Housing for the Elderly.
4. All Housing for the Elderly properties must be inspected with condition assessments made at least annually.
5. Tenancy welfare visits to all tenants will be provided to all tenants.

## **POLICY CONTACT**

The policy holder is the Property Team in the Business Performance Group.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed in four years.