

Motions

The following Motion has been submitted by Councillor Nick Colbert:

Local Homes for Local People

As we observe our housing policy in South Somerset District Council, one issue, important to our constituents, has come to light in my ward on 4 occasions since I was first elected 4 ½ years ago. Local people are not being properly recognised for their local connection which is inadvertently causing families to be split up causing stress to those families and an additional burden to social services.

As an example, despite well over 125 affordable houses being built in my ward fewer than 10% went to local people. Subsequently local people have been out pointed on our current system by people from far and wide across Somerset and beyond. That was because there is no proper recognition being awarded for being local, the net result is I have seen many local families, some being local to the town for generations, having to leave the area their family and friends network is based. The simple fact is that despite plenty of affordable homes being built in the town local people are not being given any real priority in being allocated this housing.

This is having a very detrimental effect on the people concerned as they are forced to move away from family and friends. One family I am dealing with at the moment, who have lived in the town for generations, have a child at the local school, all their friends in the town and both have aged parents who they care for in the town (one grandmother has recently broken a rib). The grandparents help in the care and upbringing of their grandchildren, and the middle generation care for both their parents and their children. This family has repeatedly been told that as they score lowly, because no recognition is made for being local under the current system, they should bid for housing in other towns. Consequently we in South Somerset District Council are inadvertently causing the middle generation of this family to move away from the town with all 3 generations of this family suffering and the aged grandparents having to resort to Social Services care if their family is forced to move away.

To resolve this problem we need to reassess people, taking account of where they already live, if they have family living in that town, if they have children in school in that town and where they are employed allocating "points" accordingly. This will result in many positive things happening. It will help keep families together and independent with all generations benefiting, keep people close to their place of work and near their network of friends creating both a better quality of life for our constituents and cut down on unnecessary travel as they will still be able to live close to family, friends, school and work.

The Motion I recommend to Council to resolve this matter is:

South Somerset District Council should adopt as soon as practically possible a system of scoring that reflects locality, family, school and work commitments to enhance the quality of life of South Somerset residents by keeping their family and friends network together, reducing the burden on social services and reducing carbon emissions by removing the need for unnecessary travel to and from visiting family, friends and work. If this can't be achieved through the Somerset Homefinder system then South Somerset should adopt its own system for the benefit of our residents or adopt the "doughnut" system of allocation via s106 agreements as used in Barton St

David or a proportion, say 50% of affordable housing in market towns should be held aside for local families using the doughnut principal.

This is not a political motion, no politics are involved it, it is merely tweaking our current system of housing allocation to benefit the people we are representing.
