



Spatial Economics Research Centre

Monday, 7 December 2009

Council Freedom on Housing Allocation

According to CLG "Housing Minister John Healey has today given councils more flexibility in how they manage their waiting lists. Councils have said they will use this extra flexibility to prioritise families with local connections [and] those seeking local employment".

Given that the project is 2m on housing waiting lists, you do wonder if this is the right time to weaken the housing need criteria. As I said back in July "in terms of equity 'local homes for local people' enshrines the right to live where you are born (residency criteria) or where you work (employment criteria). There is a debate to be had about whether these are sufficiently strong rights to weaken those around housing need (the current criteria). In terms of efficiency there is a strong argument that we need more mobility in the social housing sector not less. 'In' quickly when people are in trouble and 'out' when their long term situation improves. Further, from a spatial perspective, social housing acts as a very severe constraint on geographical mobility. A such mobility has an important role to play in adjusting to the changing economic geography of the UK economy 'local homes for local people' is surely step backwards."

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Monday, December 07, 2009](#)

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