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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Use of A.E.A. Houses and Hostel Places for Daresbury Laboratory

Note by A. W. Merrison

1. At their meeting on 28th March, 1963, I told the Personnel Committee that the Atomic Energy Authority might be able to offer a few of their houses on estates serving Risley for use by recruits to Daresbury, and I was authorised to accept these if they were needed. We have found it helpful to do this in one or two cases, either for staff coming from away whose joining would be greatly assisted by the offer of rented housing while they settled into the district or for Risley staff already living in A.E.A. houses which were conveniently placed also for Daresbury.
2. The Authority at Risley have now raised the question of rents for these houses, pointing out that on present A.E.A. rents, there is a loss which they carry, and suggesting that this should be charged to N.I.R.N.S. as is done between Harwell and the Rutherford Laboratory. It therefore seemed appropriate to report the position to the General Purposes Committee.
3. The basis for judging that the use of a few houses will prove a great help in building up the Daresbury staff is our knowledge of housing in the area and the Authority's experience in gathering professional staff for Risley. On the first point, there are undoubtedly some reasonable residential areas within reach of Daresbury, and new housing estates are being built in several places, but it is certainly not an area in which it is easy for new recruits to find suitable housing readily available. Quite a proportion of the new building is of houses of a very modest standard, and the better type of houses is less freely available and often relatively expensive. It is in these circumstances that the Authority have found that a number of recruits appreciate the opportunity of taking rented housing until they find a suitable house to buy locally; and our experience supports this completely.
4. The A.E.A. have reviewed their rent policy from time to time, and it is recommended that we should keep in line with them on this, increasing rents if they decide to do so, but otherwise continuing to carry the loss. The Daresbury staff will be on the same general pay scales and conditions as Authority staff, and some of them will be working in close consultation with Risley staff. In this situation, it would seem anomalous to apply to them a different basis for renting A.E.A. houses from that applied to their A.E.A. neighbours. It would also, of course, be contrary to the practice applied to the N.I.R.N.S. staff living on Harwell estates.
5. It is proposed that, at least until further experience is gained, Daresbury should treat as eligible for housing the same grades of married staff recruited from outside the local areas as Risley has done. This includes the Scientific Officer class, Experimental Class (excluding A.E.O.), the Engineering grades and Draughtsmen and the higher grades in the Technical and Executive grade structures.

Amendments can be made to the detailed list as recruiting proceeds. There is a wider list of grades eligible for assistance with house purchase, and the use of this rather than rented housing will be encouraged for all the grades concerned.

6. On this basis, the total number of staff who take rented housing will probably remain quite small, and certainly some of those who do will move on to houses of their own. The total expenditure is therefore difficult to estimate but the charge per house that Risley wish to make as representing their loss (including maintenance) is 13s. per week on the estate where most of the allocations are likely to be.
7. The Authority at Risley have also been most helpful in indicating that they could offer a few places in their Culcheth hostel to Daresbury staff. Although this hostel is 10 miles from Daresbury on the opposite side of Warrington, the opportunity of using it is most valuable because the area is a most difficult one for this type of accommodation, and it is premature to recommend the building of a hostel to serve Daresbury's own needs. Here again, there is an estimated loss of 12s. 6d. per resident on the current charge of £4 7s. 6d. a week, and it is suggested that this should also be included among the charges made to Daresbury by the A.E.A. at Risley.
8. Perhaps it is worth adding that the volume of Risley support services which Daresbury expects to use (apart from the main design effort on N.I.N.A. buildings) is quite small, and it has been arranged that they should be in almost all cases separately identified and costed, rather than covered by an overall charge.
9. It is therefore suggested that the arrangement should proceed on the basis of using the houses and hostel accommodation that Risley can make available at the time when Daresbury has specific recruits needing them, and that a report be made to the Committee in twelve months time to show the extent to which they have been used and the expenditure involved.