

Allocations Policy

Executive, Policy and
Community Safety Scrutiny
Panel

13 November 2018

Report Author

Victoria May, Housing Options Manager

Portfolio Holder

**Cllr Lesley Game, Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer
Neighbourhoods**

Status

For Decision

Classification:

Unrestricted

Key Decision

Key decision

Executive Summary:

Cabinet agreed a consultation draft of the council's allocations policy at its meeting on 18 October 2018. The Cabinet report and draft policy are attached to this report.

Adoption of the draft policy is subject to a period of statutory consultation, as set out in the report to Cabinet.

Members of the Executive, Policy and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel are asked to consider and comment on the draft policy.

Recommendation:

Members of the Executive, Policy and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel are asked to consider and comment on the draft policy.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

The majority of changes to the allocations policy have limited financial implications. However, the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 with a focus on homeless prevention has added significant pressure to the housing needs budgets. The 2018-19 budget was increased to allow mitigating actions to be put in place. Budgets from 2019-20 onwards are under review to take into account the additional resources required.

If proposals are agreed to include key workers there will be some system changes required and this has been quoted as £350.

Legal

The proposed policy has been reviewed by the legal team to ensure that it is compliant with current legislation.

As a local housing authority, the Council has a legal duty to provide and publish a Housing Allocations Policy in order to comply with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). The new draft Housing Allocations Policy takes into account Government code of guidance and legislation within the Equalities Act 2010, Localism Act 2011 and the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

	<p>It is important that the proposed changes are implemented to ensure this Council continues to be compliant with the relevant legislation. By updating the policy, it will ensure the best use of social housing stock in this district for those in the greatest of need including priority given to vulnerable and disadvantaged households.</p> <p>The consultation is proposed to run for 6 weeks from 22 October 2018 until 30 November 2018.</p>								
Corporate	<p>The Housing Allocations Policy has strong links with the ethos and priorities of the Corporate Plan. In particular Priority 2 “Supporting neighbourhoods stating ‘the service works to improve access to good quality affordable and sustainable homes and to help create sustainable communities for the future. In particular the service supports some of the most vulnerable members of the districts community to find and keep a home. By working with local communities to challenge and reduce anti-social behaviour and to improve the physical environment and housing conditions.</p>								
Equalities Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="440 1200 1406 1442"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Equalities are addressed within the policy, but an Equalities Impact Assessment has also been produced and is attached at appendix 2. The policy does not negatively impact on any residents of the district and aims to improve the chances of households in housing need being re-housed in social housing</p>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.		Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	X	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it		Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	
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Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults	<p>The updated policy emphasises and provides clearer definition relating to those who are in the greatest need and require social housing. The Policy highlights ‘reasonable preference’ groups as identified in Section 166A(3) Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). This includes people who may be in priority need of housing due to safeguarding related issues such as: people occupying unsanitary, overcrowded, or unsatisfactory living conditions; those with welfare and medical issues relating to a disability; people suffering hardship; and urgent re-housing due to violence.</p>								

CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant)✓	
A clean and welcoming Environment	
Promoting inward investment and job creation	
Supporting neighbourhoods	✓

CORPORATE VALUES (tick those relevant)✓	
Delivering value for money	
Supporting the Workforce	
Promoting open communications	

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 All local authorities with responsibility for housing are required by law to publish a Housing Allocations Policy which sets out how social housing properties will be allocated to those in housing need. The council must ensure that its Housing Allocations Policy complies with all legislative requirements, as set out within Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), case law and national and local housing policies.
- 1.2 The council's cabinet considered and agreed an updated draft allocations policy at its meeting on 18 October 2018. The amended policy document, summary of changes made, completed Equalities Impact Assessment and cabinet report from 18 October 2018 are attached to this report at Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.
- 1.3 Adoption of the draft policy is subject to a period of statutory consultation, as set out in the report to Cabinet, at annex 4.
- 1.4 Members of the Executive, Policy and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel are asked to consider and comment on the draft policy.

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Annex List

Annex 1	Allocation Policy amendment
Annex 2	Summary of changes made
Annex 3	Equalities Impact Assessment
Annex 4	Cabinet report of 18 October 2018

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5918/2171391.pdf

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Sarah Hills, Strategic Housing Accountant
Legal	Colin Evans, Litigation Solicitor