

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
13 SEPTEMBER 2021

HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME – ANNUAL REVIEW

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with its annual update on the application of the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme and when appropriate, to recommend some minor amends to the Scheme for Committee approval.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 As part of its previous work programme, this Committee oversaw a detailed review of the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, which was launched in April 2017.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 11 June 2018, the Committee received its annual update on the scheme and the impact of the amendments made. An Urgency Item – Minute of Decision was also presented on 11 June 2018 which advised that the urgency procedure was required to enable further amendments to the Scheme to support the implementation of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which went live in April 2018.
- 2.3 On the 11 March 2019, the Committee received and approved the recommendations contained in a report which proposed further changes to the Scheme to ensure the housing elements of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers (approved by Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019) could be delivered in Newark & Sherwood.
- 2.4 There was a further update to members on 14 September 2020, this reported on work and updates that had been undertaken with the written policy since the integration of housing back into the Council in February 2020 and sought approval of some minor policy changes.
- 2.5 At the 14 September 2020 meeting a question regarding waiting times was raised, and whilst we acknowledged the challenge around collating this data we have undertaken some basic analysis focused on priority Bands 1 and 2. These are included at appendix A of this report.

3.0 Annual Update

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme has been successfully and effectively implemented on the Council's behalf during 2020/21 by the integrated Housing, Health and Well Being Directorate.
- 3.2 The current version of the Scheme went live in July 2020, following the removal of any reference to NSH and some minor rewriting of procedural sections to ensure the correct senior officer were still involved in the relevant decision making. No further changes have been made to the policy during this period.

3.3 Banding and Lettings Data

The table below shows the number of applicants, by their bandings that were registered for housing at the end of quarter 1 2021/22.

	Total number of Applicants by end of Quarter 1 2021/22
Number of Applicants on register	5070
Applicants in Band 1	205
Applicants in Band 2	412
Applicants in Band 3	1599
Applicants in Band 4	2854

3.4 In addition to the number of applicants on the housing register below are details of the number of allocations have been made throughout 2020/21.

	Total number of Lettings for 2020/21
Total Lettings	346
Lettings to Band 1	63
Lettings to Band 2	138
Lettings to Band 3	81
Lettings to Band 4	15
Non-CBL (inc Gladstone House, extensive adaptation, direct offers for regen, managed moves).	49

3.5 100% of all lettings made in 2020/21 had a local connection to the District which is consistent with that of previous years.

4.0 Proposed Changes/Amendments

4.1 In previous updates to members it has been commonplace for the reports to contain a list of potential policy amendments with supporting text about how these changes might be a new or changed legal requirements, addressing an issue that has come to light through policy application work or changes that may be needed to make better use of stock supported with information on how it might be anticipated they might impact on the service.

4.2 However 2020/21 has seen many changes within the Housing, Health and Well Being Directorate and the service area that specifically relates to the housing register and whilst there are amendments that are needed to the written policy to keep it fit for purpose and legally compliant. There is also a much bigger piece of work that needs to take place that relates to the housing register.

4.3 Members will note from the figures in table 3.3 that there are currently over 5,000 applications registered with the council and of these nearly 3,000 are in our lowest need band, that of band 4. It has been agreed that the housing register is in need of a review and the allocation scheme will be updated alongside this piece of work.

4.4 Planning is underway in terms of how such a review may be conducted, the resources required to carry it out and the implication this may have on other areas of work such as

the increased use of digital connections. Further updates on this will be made to members in due course.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 No equalities implications have been identified from the Equalities Impact Assessment carried out which takes into account the specific needs of persons with protected characteristics to ensure the Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 have been fully considered and met.

6.0 Digital Implications

6.1 This annual review does not have any digital implications.

7.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/9447

7.1 It is not expected that any of the content of this update should have any financial implication however, if there are any associated costs they would be contained within the Council's allocated revenue budgets

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

8.1 The Allocations Scheme supports the following objective:

- i. Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, with a particular focus on narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy and other health outcomes
- ii. Reduce levels of deprivation in target areas and remove barriers to social mobility across the district

9.0 Comments of Director(s)

9.1 This report demonstrates the practical application of our Allocations Policy against the applicants on our housing register, giving transparency to allocations and shows that the policy remains fit for purpose.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (a) that Members note the contents of this report which provides an annual update on the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme;**
- (b) that delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing to approve any further minor amends required that do not require formal consultation, to ensure the Scheme continues to adhere to statutory requirements.**

Reason for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Council has a fit for purpose Housing Allocations Scheme which is a statutory requirement under the Housing Act 1996.

Background Papers

Nil.

For further information please contact Maria Cook – Assistant Business Manager Housing and Estate Management on Ext 5456 or Julie Davidson – Business Manager Housing and Estate Management on Ext 5542.

Suzanne Shead
Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Average Waiting Time for Band 1 & Band 2 applicants (2019/2020)

Band Reason	GENERAL NEEDS HOUSING						
	No of applicants housed	Band Date to Tenancy Start Date			Application Date to Tenancy Start Date		
		No of days from band date to TCD	Average no of days	Average no of weeks to be housed from band date to TCD	No of days from application date to TCD	Average no of days	Average no of weeks to be housed from application date to TCD
Band 1							
Care Leavers	4	938	235	34	2130	533	76
Under Occupation - Changing Places	2	262	131	19	262	131	19
Living Conditions	3	233	78	11	1044	348	50
Homelessness	7	333	48	7	929	133	19
Medical Grounds	2	1320	660	94	1346	673	96
Statutory Overcrowding	1	374	374	53	374	374	53
Band 2							
Homelessness	21	1320	63	9	6387	304	43
Move-on Accommodation	18	3298	183	26	11031	613	87
Medical Grounds	23	3889	169	24	12075	525	75
Care Leavers	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Insecurity of Tenure	21	1671	80	11	5178	247	35
Overcrowding	19	1929	102	14	3289	173	24
Agricultural Workers	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Additional Preference - Armed Forces	3	699	233	33	870	290	41

The data contained within this table shows the average waiting time for band one and two general needs applicants in 2019/20. As you will be aware, NSDC's Allocation Scheme award priority banding based on applicants' housing situation, with band 1 awarded to those in the greatest housing need.

The data sets are for the same applicants but demonstrate the difference between banding date and tenancy commencement verses initial application and tenancy commencement. For clarity, banding date to tenancy commencement is where the applicants has provided the necessary supporting information or evidence of their situation and have subsequently been awarded their priority banding from that date of receipt. Whereas the initial application and tenancy commencement date is where the applicant first applied to join the register but did not necessarily supply any or all the necessary supporting information for their banding to be assessed fully creating a time difference between initial application to banding award date.