

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2020

COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME – ANNUAL UPDATE

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 to update on the amends made to the Scheme following Committee approval in November 2019.

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 On the 25 November 2019, the Committee received and approved the recommendations contained in a report which proposed further amendments regarding Suitability Criteria and the removal of inconsistency of allocation dependant on route; homelessness or housing register.

3.0 Annual Update

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme has been successfully and effectively implemented on the Council's behalf by Newark and Sherwood Homes under the Management Agreement until February 2020 when the housing service was fully reintegrated back into the Council.
- 3.2 The current version (4b) of the scheme refers to this delegated approach however work has been carried out to remove all mention of Newark and Sherwood Homes from the document; the principles of the scheme remain the same.
- 3.3 The current version of the Scheme went live in November 2019, following the successful implementation of the amendments approved by Committee in June and November 2019.
- 3.3 In line with the annual update an impact report is attached at **Appendix A**

Banding and Lettings Data

- 3.4 The table below shows the number of applicants, by their bandings that were registered for housing at the end of quarter 4 2019/20.

	Total number of Applicants by end of Quarter 4 2019/20
Number of Applicants on register	4043
Applicants in Band 1	135
Applicants in Band 2	305
Applicants in Band 3	1270
Applicants in Band 4	2333

- 3.5 In addition to the number of applicants on the housing register below are details of the number of allocations made throughout 2019/20.

	Total number of Lettings for 2019/20
Total Lettings	434
Lettings to Band 1	53
Lettings to Band 2	189
Lettings to Band 3	110
Lettings to Band 4	25

- 3.6 100% of all lettings made in 2019/20 had a local connection to the District which is consistent with that of previous years.
- 3.7 The overarching feedback from this assessment is that the majority of the changes are creating positive improvement and are achieving their desired outcomes. There are some amendments to the scheme, such as the Right to Move Regulations and Fostering/Adoption where the impact and outcomes cannot be measured at this time as there have not been applicants who fulfil these criteria. Both of these are legal requirements and therefore will remain within the policy and ongoing monitoring of the Scheme will continue.
- 3.8 To provide assurance to Members, and in accordance with the Scheme, there remains in place an Project Group that meets quarterly to regularly review the Allocations Scheme to ensure its requirements are being implemented and that it continues to meet relevant legislation and any new duties placed upon the Council.

Registration and Bidding Online

- 3.9 Since 4 April 2019, those looking for a new home have been able to complete an application to join the housing register, view available properties and register interest in a property online via the customer portal ‘MyAccount’. 67% of applications received 2019/20 have been on-line.

- 3.10 Recap – Minor Amends
- 3.11 The Project Group identified an augmentation to the Suitability Criteria which required improved clarity be given to applicants who had contact with their children but whom did not live with them; access for shared parenting. Policy now states very clearly that we will not provide a second bedroom for children, with the caveat that exceptional circumstances would be reviewed on an individual basis. Further explanation was added to the Policy which reflected that used by HMRC dependency rules.
- 3.12 The Project Group also added further clarity to the Suitability Criteria for applicants who are pregnant with regard to the number of bedrooms they are eligible for.
- 3.13 A new additional category was added to assist larger families due to limited stock and turnover.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 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.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Any associated costs with these proposals they will be contained within the Council's allocated revenue budgets.

6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

6.1 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

7.0 Comments of Director(s)

This report outlines the impact of our Allocations Policy against the applicants on our housing register, giving transparency to allocations and has updated to reflect housing coming back into the Council as well as clarity around bedroom eligibility and pregnancy.

8.0 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 on the content of this report please contact Julie Davidson, Tenancy & Estates Manager on ext. 5542

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