



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

EXECUTIVE

13 FEBRUARY 2018

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

Report of Director (Community Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Executive of the changes to the Council's Housing Allocations policy that are designed to ensure that people with the most housing need and with a local connection are given preference to join the Housing Register.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Executive:
- 2.2 Notes the changes and approves the proposed Allocations Policy for consultation.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Director (Community Services) and Executive member for Housing and Community Safety to make any amendments to the policy arising from the consultation and to agree an implementation date.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Housing Act 1996 section 166A(3) requires that a Local Authority must give reasonable preference to certain categories of people. Communities and Local Government (CLG) issue guidance to Local Authorities requiring them to review allocations policies and ensure that social homes go to those who have a genuine need. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 means the Allocations Policy has to be reviewed to ensure we are meeting our legislative responsibilities.
- 3.2 The current Allocations Policy has been in place since 2013. For a number of reasons the policy has needed to be reviewed, these reasons include:

- The need to respond to the challenges that welfare reforms has placed on applicants;
- To promote tenancy sustainment by early identification around affordability and other support needs;
- To reconsider local connection in line with other county partners;
- To make the best use of housing stock given current demands;
- To ensure there is an appropriate banding system;
- To build on what worked well and where it has been identified more clarification is needed;
- To meet the legislative responsibilities of the Homelessness Reduction Act;

3.3 The proposed Allocations Policy is detailed in appendix 1.

3.4 The main changes to the policy are as follows:

- Applicants who are claiming a connection through family will be required to provide evidential support;
- Applicants will require a two year local connection to the Borough in certain cases;
- Applicants will be required to provide information on income and expenditure to be able to identify any issues around affordability.
- The Policy will provide a more prescriptive approach on how applicants with rent arrears will be assessed;
- Applicants who have received a warning letter regarding abuse on staff will be suspended for a minimum of three months. This will be reviewed and if there is a change in behaviour the suspension will be lifted;
- The eligibility matrix for properties has been amended to bring it in line with overcrowding regulations in addition to making best use of ground floor and bungalow accommodation;
- Reasonable preference is given to certain Priority Groups as stated in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018;
- Those applicants in Critical banding will be direct matched to a property. Those applicants in Priority banding who have not been placed through the homelessness legislation will be direct matched to a suitable property after the initial 8 week period. If the offer is refused they will return to their original banding;
- Those placed in Priority and High banding groups have 8 weeks to express a choice in their bidding. This brings the process in line the legal obligations of the Homelessness Reduction Act Prevention and Relief duties.

3.5 When changing the Allocations Policy there is a statutory requirement to consult with Registered Social Housing Providers. This consultation would take place over a four week period.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

4.1 This report is to be taken to an open session.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [TP]

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

6.1 Set out within the body of this report.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Supports corporate plan priorities of people, place and prosperity.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Statutory consultation will take place with Registered Providers who operate in the Borough.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

9.1

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
New statutory functions arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act will not catered for in the Allocations Policy	Allocations Policy supports the duties of the HRA	Jo Wykes

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By the very nature of allocating homes, a large number of customers will have identified needs and be part of vulnerable groups. The Allocations Policy aims to assist those in the most housing need and to support the most vulnerable clients to sustain a tenancy by identifying issues at an early stage to sign post to appropriate support.

The Policy has been amended to ensure only local residents or those with a proven strong connection to the Borough are given access to the Housing Register. When appropriate, there are options for Local Lettings Policies..

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

Background papers: Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Allocations Policy 2018
Homelessness Reduction Act Report (attached):

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