



Report sponsor: Rachel North,
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Options

ITEM 9

Allocations Policy 2020-2025

Purpose

- 1.1 Each local authority is required to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities for the allocation of social housing. The existing Allocations Policy, approved in March 2013, requires formally updating to reflect subsequent legislative changes and to respond to local authorities current and emerging strategic priorities.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the draft Allocations Policy 2020-2025, appended to this report.

Reason

- 3.1 To ensure the local authority makes best use of available social housing.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The way that a Local Authority allocates empty properties is largely governed by various Acts of Parliament and also the outcome of cases that have been before the Courts. The Council also takes account of Government guidance concerning allocations which are published from time to time.
- 4.2 Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended governs the allocation of local authority housing stock in England; it was substantially amended, with effect from 31 January 2003, by the Homelessness Act 2002, by the Localism Act 2011 and more recently the HRA 2017.
- 4.3 Section 167 (1) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended requires every local housing authority to have a scheme for determining priorities, the procedure to be followed and for allocating housing accommodation.
- 4.4 Section 167 (2) states that the scheme has to include a statement on the authority's policy on offering people who are to be allocated housing accommodation a choice of housing accommodation and the opportunity to express preferences about the housing accommodation that is offered to them.

- 4.5 The Localism Act gives local authorities greater power to decide which categories of person they will allocate accommodation to.
- 4.6 The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 has placed additional duties on Local Authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness wherever practicable and possible. The refresh of the allocations policy gives the Local Authority the ability to assist homeless households under these new duties.
- 4.7 The Allocation Policy explains the rules that set out how the Council, through Derby Homefinder Landlords, allocates social housing properties. It applies when we:
- a) select a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of the Council;
 - b) nominate a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by another person; or
 - c) nominate a person to be an assured tenant of housing accommodation held by a private registered provider of social housing or a registered social landlord
- 4.8 The Allocation Policy enables the following:
- a) Identify those people in the greatest housing need and help them decide where they would like to live
 - b) Prevents people from becoming statutory homeless
 - c) Makes best use of the housing stock and suggest other housing options to applicants
 - d) Ensures that the Council's legal duties are met
 - e) Reduces the number of properties refused by applicants and ensures properties are let as quickly as possible
 - f) Enables applicants to be informed of vacancies which arise and express an interest ensuring the allocation of social housing offers realistic and informed choice for all
 - g) Fair and equal access to social housing irrespective of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief and age
 - h) Appropriate priority to customers who fall within the Housing Act 1996 'reasonable preference' categories
 - i) Appropriate priority to customers that fall within the 'local preference' categories, as defined by Derby City Council.
 - j) Ability to be flexible with percentages of available accommodation to each band, which will be reviewed periodically to ensure best use of housing stock, meeting the demands of the City.
- 4.9 The previous policy operated using 2 bands, Emergency & General Needs. The revised allocations policy introduces a third band, changing the priorities of those within each band to represent the financial pressures upon the Local Authority.
- Corporate Needs Band – will address the corporate priorities of the City such as:
 - Foster Carers & Adopters
 - Care Leavers
 - Releasing Larger Properties
 - Move on from Specialist Supported Housing
 - Severe Medical

- Priority Needs Band – will address
 - People who are Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness
 - HM Armed Forces
- General Needs Band – will address all other applicant who are identified with a housing need
 - Under occupying by one bed space
 - Need to move to take up or remain in employment, education or training opportunity

4.10 Allocations to each band will be through quotas of available accommodation. These quota's will be reviewed every 6 months, or sooner if there is a need to respond to emerging issues.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 A number of stakeholder events took place between July and December 2019 involving councillors, statutory and voluntary sector partners. The events shaped the creation of a corporate initiatives band.
- 5.2 A full public consultation on the draft Allocations Policy commenced in February 2020 and concluded in June 2020. Over 120 citizens responded to the consultation. Feedback from this consultation has been reviewed and incorporated where appropriate.
- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in November 2019.

Other options

- 6. The local authority is required to have an allocations scheme. The current scheme is outdated and needs updating.
- 6.1 The local authority could choose to retain the existing two bands for rehousing; emergency and general needs. This would continue to meet the statutory requirements but would not offer greater opportunity to target the use of social housing to those where the current and emerging need is greatest.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7. There are no financial issues associated to this allocations policy. Officer resources to amend the IT Portal system of Homefinder are embedded within business operations.
- 7.1 Value for money will be achieved by ensuring the local authority makes best use of the available social housing stock.

- 7.2 The refreshed allocations policy will make better use of social housing, through enabling strategic priorities across the local authority to be responded to more effectively.

Legal implications

8. The proposed Allocations Policy addresses the Council's statutory obligations in respect of The Housing Act 1996, Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 The Allocations Policy is intended to provide a framework covering our actions in relation to Allocations within Derby and how we will prioritise available social housing from the Homefinder partners to meet needs of those requiring housing solutions in Derby. The policy supports the Council Plan 2019-23 themes of: A City of Health and Happiness and A Council focussed on the things that matter.
- 9.2 The Allocations Policy is aligned with and supportive of the Council's adopted Housing Strategy 2020-2030, particularly Priority 1 of the strategy which relates to 'making best use of stock'.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu	18/08/20
Finance	Amanda Fletcher	20/08/20
Service Director(s)	Clare Mehrbani	10/08/20
Report sponsor	Rachel North	20/08/20
Other(s)	Jeremy Mason	17/08/20
Background papers:		
List of appendices:		

