



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
1 AUGUST 2006

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Social
Cohesion and Housing Strategy

ITEM 7

Housing Allocations Policy

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The current Housing Allocations Policy was agreed by Full Cabinet on 9 April 2003 and amended to take account of the Homelessness Act 2002 in September 2003.
- 1.2 The social housing market has significantly changed over the last three years and, as a result, the current Housing Allocations Policy is no longer fit for purpose.
- 1.3 Both the Housing Options Centre and members of the Community Regeneration Commission have undertaken a comprehensive and detailed consultation exercise on the current Housing Allocations Policy.
- 1.4 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consider the recommendations arising from the Community Regeneration Commission's Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Topic Review.
- 2.2 To agree the proposed Housing Allocations Policy.
- 2.3 To agree to implement the Housing Allocations Policy at the same time as the introduction of the new Housing IT system. This is expected in late Autumn 2006. A further report will be brought back prior to implementation to set the initial percentages for each property band.
- 2.4 To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing policy to agree future changes to the percentage of properties to be allocated to each band, subject to parameters agreed by Cabinet prior to implementation.
- 2.5 To note that in the first few months of implementing this policy, there will be a need to allocate a higher percentage of properties to homeless households where the Council has already accepted a statutory duty. This will be necessary to reduce the backlog of homeless cases.
- 2.6 To inform partner providers, tenants, all housing applicants on the Joint Housing Register of the Housing Allocations Policy and new IT system.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The practical implementation of the proposed Housing Allocations Policy requires the new IT system to ensure that it operates efficiently. The integrated system includes software for choice based lettings, housing register and homelessness.
- 3.2 The delegation of authority is required to ensure that the percentage of allocations to each band is politically ratified. The conversion of each housing application is a complex process and once complete will require a quick turn around to ensure the new IT system and Housing Allocation Policy can be implemented.
- 3.3 The higher percentage of properties allocated to homeless households will ensure the transition from the current policy to the proposed policy still enables the Council to meet its statutory obligations. Once the backlog of cases is reduced, the proposed Housing Allocations Policy contains the ability to review and amend the percentage of properties allocated to each band.



Housing Allocations Policy

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 1.1 The current Housing Allocations Policy was approved by full Council on 9 April 2003, and implemented city-wide on 1 May 2003.
- 1.2 The implementation of the Homelessness Act 2002 resulted in an amendment to the Housing Allocations Policy in September 2003. This included new provisions relating to Homelessness. These included:
 - making homeless households a “final offer” of accommodation, in order that councils could discharge their homelessness duty
 - reducing the level of bed and breakfast accommodation used for families as temporary accommodation to zero by April 2004, except in the case of an emergency
 - increasing the range of priority needs groups under homelessness legislation.
- 1.3 A commitment was made to review the Housing Allocation Policy in the future to ensure that it still met the needs of a changing housing market.

Housing Allocation Policy Consultation

- 1.4 The Housing Options Centre, Housing and Advice Services review of the Housing Allocation Policy began in July 2005 and ended on 15 November 2005. The methodology and findings from the Consultation are detailed within the ‘Report on the Review of the Allocation Policy’ report. This report is available from the Housing Options Centre.
- 1.5 The Community Regeneration Commission – CRC, part of Overview and Scrutiny, also unanimously agreed at their meeting on 5 July 2005 that the Housing Allocation Policy should be subject of their next topic review. The CRC review began on 22 September 2005 and the evidence gathering ended on 19 December 2005

- 1.6 The findings from the CRC review were presented to Cabinet on 4 July 2006. The CRC report has 20 recommendations to be considered by Cabinet for inclusion within the Housing Allocation Policy. The 20 recommendations and the comments from the Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing policy are detailed below.

Recommendations	Responses
1. To ensure the key policy goal of increasing moves between current tenants is delivered, there should be “indicative allocations” within the blue and yellow bands between current tenants seeking re-housing and prospective new tenants.	Our legal advice is that the use of “indicative allocations” would leave the Council open to legal challenge and therefore this recommendation cannot be accepted.
2. One specific aspiration arising from the Allocation Policy should be to eliminate the housing of children in flats except where this is and for as long as it remains the family choice.	The proposed policy will give greater opportunity for existing tenants to find alternative housing.
3. To encourage under-occupying tenants to move to smaller properties there needs to be: a) a substantial increase in the cash incentives for tenants willing to down-size and b) practical help offered to make a move as straightforward as possible: a start to finish service to help tenants pack, arrange transport, deal with the utilities, and produce new address cards for friends and relatives.	A working group of officers from both the Housing Options Centre and Derby Homes has been set up to develop a strategy in relation to under-occupancy.
4. A dedicated officer should be employed to review, improve and promote exchanges – and minimise the obstacles to moves between and within different Homefinder landlords.	The new Housing IT system will improve the exchange process for all applicants looking to exchange. Derby Homes have recently centralised their allocations team, which will lead to further efficiencies in the process. The need for a role that specifically improves and promotes exchanges needs to be considered once both the new IT system and the Derby Homes allocations team are operational. As the Housing Options Centre does not allocate properties such a post if required, would be better placed within Derby Homes.

Recommendations	Responses
5. As well as encouraging mutual exchanges there should, subject to legal opinion on the <i>vires</i> , also be the facility for a tenant to exchange with an empty property so long as this does not allow trading up.	Agree that we should encourage and support mutual exchanges but our legal advice is that it would leave the Council open to challenge if we had a policy of facilitating tenants to exchange with an empty property.
6. The new software needs to be able to flag where a client has particular social or housing support needs and/or that liaison with another agency is needed in the allocation of suitable accommodation*.	Agreed.
7. Liaison work with other agencies needs to be undertaken to change the widely held perception that clients have to be make regular bids to remain on the system*	Agreed – the new Housing IT system will make the process much clearer.
8. a) Focussed attention should be given by Cabinet until the need for the use of B&B placements for 16 and 17 year olds is swiftly and permanently obviated by alternative provision* and b) Cabinet should monitor the use of B&B placements for families with children.	This is an issue that is currently monitored at the Cabinet Member monthly briefings. The Council is monitored by the government through Best Value Performance Indicators.
9. Local Government Act 2000 “well-being” powers need to be invoked to assist discrete client groups needing support but who fall between the stools of specific powers, including adults not diagnosed with mental health problems but who require medication to maintain stable behaviour.	The Assistant Director for Housing and Advice Services is to bring forward a report on this issue.
10. There needs to be induction and then advanced training for Members about the new allocations scheme <i>and</i> associated ODPM guidance and procedures on housing*.	Agreed.

Recommendations	Responses
11. One copy of the new Derby policy and ODPM housing guidance and procedures should be placed in the three party group rooms and that of independent members*.	Agreed.
12. In order to help promote the Government's wider public policy agenda, the Council Cabinet should lobby for the Home Office to produce national guidance to promote reciprocal agreements between local authorities to accept each others' individuals needing to 'start afresh' after drug dependency or life-term imprisonment.	A reciprocal agreement for ex-offenders already exists between Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. The Assistant Director for Housing and Advice Services has been asked to explore with the Community Safety Partnership other initiatives in relation to people with a drug dependency and those leaving prison after a life-term.
13. The Council should use less strict criteria regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 and 17 year olds generally and • care leavers into their early to mid twenties when considering intentional homelessness, as someone making a youthful error should not be treated as an older adult who might be expected to have 'known better' – and ex-care leavers have no parents to fall back on.	The assessment for homelessness follows the government's code of guidance. Any move away from the code of guidance leaves the Council vulnerable to legal challenge and as such means we are not able to use less strict criteria for 16-17 year olds. It is important that we are consistent in our decision making process so that we do not have a situation where different officers act in different ways. There is a new protocol in place between the Housing Options Centre and the Leaving Care Team in Social Services on the re-housing of Care Leavers. This protocol is working well.
14. The benefit of settled accommodation in facilitating successful drugs treatment does not seem to be adequately recognised in Derby, either as regards 'vulnerability' or the awarding of medical points: the Commission were convinced of the link between housing and treatment outcomes and recommend this be reviewed by the HOC.	The Housing Options Centre links in with the Drug Intervention Programme, to identify people leaving prison with previous drug addictions, to access the private rented sector by providing a rent deposit. It is not appropriate within legislation to give medical points for a drug addiction, unless they have a medical condition as a consequence of their addiction.

Recommendation	Response
15. The Guide to Temporary Accommodation in Derby needs to be brought up-to-date and then maintained as a live document.*	Agreed.
16. A specific policy aspiration should be to increase the number of hostel dwellers securing homes through Homefinder, so as to decongest the hostel system*.	The policy as drafted will increase the number of hostel dwellers securing accommodation through Derby Homefinder.
17. The HOC staffing review should be used to enhance: a) the capacity for face-to-face contact with those who have difficulty using the Homefinder system eg care leavers, patients, individuals with mental health problems or literacy/linguistic difficulties or leading chaotic lives and b) the close working between the HOC and the professionals dealing with sensitive/vulnerable cases eg through outreach surgeries at the hospitals, in the hostels, with the care leavers and mental health teams.	The re-organisation is designed to give a focus to case work to prevent homelessness and will lead to greater personalised contact with customers and other professionals. This re-organisation is currently being implemented.
18. Council Cabinet are strongly encouraged to sufficiently fund the new system to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overcome the several current limitations and problems, • ensure the new Allocations Policy can be fully delivered <i>and</i> • future-proof it against Council or Whitehall-imposed revisions over the next decade*. 	The new IT system has now been ordered and will be in place during the Autumn. This has been funded by existing budgets. The initial contract term is for three years. Any upgrades or improvements to the system required by the Council or government are included within the annual software support and maintenance charges.
19. To raise standards in the affordable private rented sector and of bed and breakfast businesses a voluntary quality scheme should be explored by the City Council.	Derby City Council is leading on a regional project – DASH (Decent and Safe Homes). This project is developing a landlord accreditation scheme, which will have the affect of driving up standards in the private rented sector.

Recommendation	Response
20. Focussed attention be given to achieving a reduction in the (approximate) average 30 day void period for Derby Homes properties.	As part of continuous improvement a target for Derby Homes void period has been set at 26 days for 2006/7. This is monitored on a monthly basis and will be reported to Cabinet.

*Asterix means verbal broad agreement has previously been indicated by relevant officers to the Commission

The proposed Housing Allocation Policy

- 1.7 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the proposed Housing Allocation Policy and the key differences from the current policy. The proposed Housing Allocations Policy is contained within Appendix 2.
- 1.8 The key aims of the proposed Housing Allocation Policy are to:
- help people in housing need choose where they would like to live
 - prevent people from becoming statutorily homeless
 - make the best use of the limited social housing available and advise applicants about other housing options.
- 1.9 The Housing Allocation Policy is framed to take account of housing need within the legal framework. The policy also details how the Council aims to reconcile choice and need. The Housing Allocation Policy guides the principles of how properties will be allocated in a fair and transparent manner.
- 1.10 The proposed Housing Allocations Policy is also written to take into account the implementation of the new IT system.
- 1.11 The proposed Housing Allocations Policy takes into account the High Court ruling on the need for policies to be framed in a manner to that takes account of applicants, joint applicants and/or their households multiple needs. The views of Counsel were gained as part of this process. Further details of the *Cali v Waltham Forest* case is contained in Appendix 2 section 2.1.
- 1.12 It is also expected that the proposed Housing Allocation Policy, in conjunction with the implementation of the new Housing IT system, will better meet the needs of customers. This will be through a greater variety of options, improved information and feedback.

Key differences from the current Housing Allocation Policy

1.13 Prevention of homelessness

- 1.14 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy takes greater account of the growing importance of preventing homelessness.

- 1.15 Homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need. The impact of homelessness does have a detrimental impact on families, childless couples and single people.
- 1.16 Derby currently has the highest acceptance of homelessness in the East Midlands. It is felt that the current Housing Allocation Policy encourages homelessness approaches. The government's drive and future funding is aimed at preventing homelessness.
- 1.17 Part of the Housing Options Centre consultation process included consideration of a report from a homelessness specialist at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister entitled "Reducing homeless acceptance. Do allocation policies help or hinder?" This report details how quotas within an allocation policy in conjunction with a preventative approach can help reduce the levels of homelessness acceptance.
- 1.18 The Housing Allocation Policy is framed to prevent homelessness by:
- quoted allocation – this will allow staff to mediate with applicants over their housing circumstances and demonstrate that if they can stay where they are they do have a greater chance of being offered a property
 - being implemented at the same time as the purchase of a new homelessness IT system that is based on prevention and case management.
- 1.19 The implementation of the Housing Allocation Policy may present initial problems in reducing the numbers of applicants that have already been accepted as statutorily homeless. It is intended that during the first few months of implementing this policy, that a higher proportion of allocations are made to this group to reduce the backlog.
- 1.20 It is envisaged that the implementation of the new staffing structure at the Housing Options Centre will start to prevent homelessness and reduce the number of homelessness acceptances. This will be through:
- new Housing Advisor posts offering a better service of advice and guidance on other housing options
 - effective evidence gathering and verification of applicants approaching as homeless
 - visits to applicants that state they are homeless at home.
- 1.21 **Fewer bands**
- 1.22 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy reduces the number of bands or categories of housing need from seven to four. The new bands are called:
- Emergency Band
 - A Band
 - B Band
 - C Band

- 1.23 The reduction in bands will simplify the registration process for housing applications and improve customer understanding of the banding structure.
- 1.24 The government's current Code of Guidance for Allocations encourages local authorities to adopt a simplified banding approach rather than the traditional points based system.
- 1.25 **Percentage allocations across the four bands**
- 1.26 The foundation of the proposed Housing Allocation Policy is to advertise a percentage of properties to each band. This is known as a 'quoted allocation' scheme.
- 1.27 A key finding from the Housing Options Centre consultation was the apparent unfairness of the existing Housing Allocation Policy which does not provide a realistic chance of being re-housed from any of the lower bands.
- 1.28 A move to quoted allocations will ...
- Reduce 'band chasing' – this is where an applicant attempts to worsen their circumstances with a view to increasing their chances of being made an offer of housing. This behaviour was first identified by the BMRB Social Research report entitled "Applicants' Perspective on Choice Based Lettings" in December 2003. This research was commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
 - Allow Derby Homes and the Registered Social Landlords to advertise properties with eligibility criteria that take greater account of the needs of the neighbourhood. For example, if two previous three bed houses have been allocated to families with teenage children it may be appropriate to advertise the third property as being suitable for a family with younger children.
 - Prevent homelessness by demonstrating to applicants that there is a greater chance of being offered a property. This will help applicants move from their current situation without the Council having to accept a statutory homeless duty to re-house.
 - Enable greater movement within the social housing market. The quoted allocation would give existing tenants of the Council and the Registered Social Landlords a greater chance of moving to a larger or more suitable property. This would release their property to be allocated.
 - Provide all applicants with a greater chance of being re-housed.
- 1.29 The policy includes the ability for the quotas to be reviewed and changed every three months. This may happen, for example, if there is a larger than expected number of applicants awarded the Emergency Band to whom the Council have a duty to allocate. It is proposed that authority to agree the quotas be delegated to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing policy. Any changes would be published on the Derby Homefinder website and in the weekly property lists.
- 1.30 The advertising of the quotas is transparent and will enable staff to give applicants information on the average length of time to get an offer of housing.

1.31 One Final Offer Policy and Points Back

- 1.32 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy does not contain Band 1A, the One Final Offer Policy for homeless applicants re-housed from bed and breakfast or the Points Back scheme for those applicants who reapply 12 months after their One Final Offer.
- 1.33 The previous policy included the One Final Offer Policy to applicants awarded Band 1A to help reduce the usage of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 1.34 In December 2003 there were only 8 temporary accommodation units available. This meant that there was little move on from bed and breakfast unless a household was re-housed permanently.
- 1.35 The cost implications and unsuitability of the housing, especially for families, were factors that necessitated the additional priority and the One Final Offer Policy.
- 1.36 The number of temporary accommodation units in the city has increased to 57 units. However the government has set an objective to reduce the usage of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. For Derby, this means reducing the number of units of temporary accommodation to 29 by 2010.
- 1.37 The Council is required, by government, to produce a Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan which must include targets for the reduction in use of temporary accommodation for each of the next 4 years. The usage of temporary accommodation is a Best Value performance Indicator and may affect the Council's CPA rating.
- 1.38 The Council still has to use bed and breakfast accommodation on occasions but applicants are moved as soon as possible to temporary accommodation. Band 1A has been removed as moving the applicant from bed and breakfast into temporary accommodation gives them the three month time-limited choice available to all other homeless applicants. This removes the need for the One Final Offer Policy.
- 1.39 The higher Band 1A also encouraged applicants to request bed and breakfast accommodation. This gave an unfair additional priority on property shortlists over other homeless applicants.
- 1.40 The previous policy included the Points Back scheme as it was felt that those applicants in bed and breakfast who were made One Final Offer were unable to express choice and should have priority if after a year they had not settled in their accommodation.
- 1.41 During the two years since the points back scheme was introduced only two requests have been received. One of these requests resulted in a move.

1.42 Eligibility

- 1.43 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy details the eligibility criteria for applicants. This will make the process of looking for and expressing an interest in suitable properties a more transparent process.

- 1.44 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy expands on the applicant's eligibility for various sizes of properties. For example, the maximum and minimum number of people suitable for a property.
- 1.45 The proposed Housing Allocation Policy is also written to take account of our technical requirements from the recently procured Housing IT System.
- 1.46 In the last financial year 12,857 applicants, who may have been offered a property, were bypassed because the IT system did not prevent them from expressing an interest in properties they were not eligible for.
- 1.47 Of these 5,760 applicants would have been prevented from expressing an interest in the property with an IT system that had a basic eligibility function.
- 1.48 **Movement within the Social Housing Market**
- 1.49 The proposed Housing Allocations Policy offers a greater variety of options for applicants. These include:
- a greater relative degree of chance for all applicants to be re-housed
 - quoted allocation across all bands, which will inevitably lead to more existing tenants being re-housed and release of their property
 - quoted allocation creating movement within the hostel and supported accommodation for applicants that are ready for independent living
 - an effective mutual exchange scheme across Council and Registered Social landlord properties
 - Homebuy and other low cost home ownership options.

Housing IT System

- 1.50 The process of procuring a new Housing IT system ended on 2 May 2006.
- 1.51 The new Housing IT system will incorporate housing register, choice based lettings and homelessness modules.
- 1.52 The signing of contract is expected by mid-July. The supplier has given an implementation timetable of around 12 weeks. If the project to implement the new IT system runs to schedule the launch of the new system and implementation of the proposed Housing Allocation Policy would be around the middle of October 2006.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Assistant Director of Housing and Advice Services and members of the Community Regeneration Commission agreed that the current Housing Allocations Policy required reviewing. It is agreed that remaining with the current Housing Allocations Policy would hinder the Council, especially in the prevention of homelessness.

- 2.2 The proposed Housing Allocations Policy takes account of housing legislation and the local needs identified during the consultation process.
- 2.3 A variety of options were considered during consultation between Housing and Advice Services, Community Regeneration Commission, Derby Homes, Registered Social Landlords, Counsel and a variety of other support agencies. The proposed Housing Allocations Policy is considered to be the best option available.

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Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – Proposed Housing Allocations Policy

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The implementation of a new Housing Allocation Policy will require written contact with every applicant on the housing register.
- 1.2 The new policy and accessibility of services meets the Council's E-government strategy and will lead to efficiencies in the operating of the service.
- 1.3 In 2005/06 the Council spent £479,684 on temporary accommodation, of which £409,653 was recovered from Housing Benefit. The net cost was £70,031.

Legal

- 2.1 The case of R (Cali & Others) v London Borough of Waltham Forest [2006] EWHC 302 (Admin) examined the allocations policy of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The case is the leading authority on the sufficiency of multiple needs assessments in the choice based lettings context. The court found the policy of London Borough of Waltham Forest to be deficient on the basis that it did not take into account the multiple needs of households making application for an allocation of housing. The principal criticism levelled at the authority was that the policy contained within it, no ability to aggregate the needs of individual members of the same household. Leading on from that concern was that the authority's decision about which band to place an application in and, in turn, the applicants qualification for housing, was not influenced by the increasing level of aggregate needs.
- 2.2 There is a statutory requirement imposed on the Council under the Homelessness Act 2002, where a Housing Allocation Policy is amended or reviewed to consult fully with its tenants and other housing providers in the city.
- 2.3 This means that we will consult with partner providers with which the Council has nomination arrangements and tenants.
- 2.4 There is also a requirement to notify all applicants on the joint housing register about policy changes. This will be achieved through written notification to each applicant on the register together with an advert in the local press. The number of applicants on the housing register is currently 8,105.
- 2.5 These changes enable the Council to satisfactorily meet the requirements under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the High Court ruling in the Cali v The London Borough of Waltham Forest case.

Personnel

- 3.1 The staffing restructure at Housing Options Centre will change a reactive service to a proactive approach. The framing of the service will be to prevent homelessness. The staffing restructure has already been agreed and signed off by the Corporate Director of Resources and Housing and the Assistant Director – Human Resources.
- 3.2 The obligations on the Council are to provide equality of choice within housing. The amendments to the Allocations Policy fully incorporate the Council's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. Publicity material will be produced incorporating the main minority ethnic languages.

Equalities impact

- 4.1 The principles of the proposed Housing Allocations Policy are to operate in a fair and transparent manner, taking account of both the Council's duty to take account of housing need and it's wish to offer as much choice as possible.
- 4.2 The implementation of the Housing Allocations Policy at the same time as the new IT system will improve the level of service available to all members of the community.

Corporate priorities

- 5.1 The proposal comes under the Corporate priorities of 'build healthy and independent communities' and 'deliver excellent services, performance and value for money'.



DERBY CITY COUNCIL



HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

Version Audit

Version	Date	Amendments	Name
1	02/02/06	First draft	JE
2	12/02/06	Amendments to entire document	JE/KM/TT
3	22/02/06	Amendments to document	JE/KM/LC
4	02/03/06	Plain English changes to document	RD
5	20/03/06	Legal changes	OI
6	22/03/06	Amendments to document	LC/JE
7	04/04/06	Plain English Panel changes and comments	RD/PE
8	02/06/06	Multiple needs	JE
9	06/06/06	Final amends after Managers meeting	JE
10	29/06/06	Counsel opinion received	JE
11	13/07/06	Final amends from Counsel	JE

Translations and making the policy accessible

We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it. Please contact us on 01332 716483 or Minicom 01332 716497.

Arabic

يمكننا ان نعطيكم تلك المعلومات بأية طريقة، اسلوب أو اللغة التي تساعدك على الاستفادة منها.
من فضلك اتصل بنا على 01332 716497 مينيكوم 01332 716483

French

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Hindi

हम आपको यह जानकारी किसी दूसरे तरह और ढंग से या दूसरी भाषा में भी दे सकते हैं जिससे आपको इसे प्राप्त करने में मदद मिल सकेगी. कृपया हमसे इन नंबरों द्वारा संपर्क कीजिए 01332 716483
मिनीकाम 01332 716497

Kurdish

ئێمه دهتوانين ئهم زانیاریانهت به ههر ڕێگهیهکی تر، شیوازیکی تر یان زمانیکی
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پێوه بکه له سههر ژماره ی 01332 716497 مینیکۆم 01332 716483

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ,
ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ
01332 716483 ਮਿਨੀਕਮ 01332 716497 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Waxanu kugu siin karaynaa war-bixintan siyaabo kasta oo kale, hab ama
luuqad ka caawisa in aad geli-karto. Fadlan nagala soo xiriir
01332 716483 Minicom 01332 716497

Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم
01332 716483 مینی کام 01332 716497 پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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1.0 Glossary and definition of terms

Allocation Policy	This explains the rules that determine how Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords allocate social housing properties. The Policy also outlines other housing options.
Arms-length management organisation	A company set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.
Assignments	The term used when you wish to transfer your tenancy to another member of your household. The existing tenant would have to give up the tenancy and their rights are passed on to the other household member.
Bypassing	<p>The term used when a Derby Homefinder Landlord rejects an applicant for a property because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the applicant is not suitable, or• the property would not meet the applicant's needs.
Choice-based lettings	A scheme that gives all applicants a greater degree of choice of home.
Compulsory Purchase Order	Local authorities and government agencies have powers under various Acts of parliament to buy land and buildings that is needed to help deliver social and economic changes.
Council Cabinet	The Council Cabinet is Derby City Council's main decision-making body.
Derby Homefinder	The name of the choice-based lettings scheme in Derby.
Derby Homes	The name of the arms-length management organisation that manages Derby City Council-owned properties.
Eligibility	The term used to describe factors that match an applicant to a property. For example, the size of your household and the number of bed spaces in a property.
Expressing an interest	Your way of telling the Derby Homefinder Landlord that you would like to live in a property.
Habitual residence test	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work/work prospects or family ties.
Mutual exchange	A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each tenant moving permanently into the other persons/tenants property.

Non-statutorily homeless	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a duty to make an offer of permanent housing.
Nomination	The term is used when a local housing authority provides, from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.
Rechargeable repairs	This is damage caused by a tenant to a property during a tenancy for which the tenant is directly and/or indirectly responsible.
Registered social landlords	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered by the Housing Corporation to provide social housing.
Rights of Residence Directive	This directive allows citizens from the European Economic Area who are not economically active to live in another member country. A condition of this is that the citizen should have enough resources to avoid relying on the benefits system of the member country.
Shared ownership	This scheme allows first time buyers and others in unique circumstances to buy a proportion of a new home and to pay rent on the remaining proportion.
Shortlist	A list of applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular property advertised on Derby Homefinder.
Social housing	The term used for affordable rental accommodation owned by a local council or housing association.
Statutorily homeless	A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority have a duty to make a permanent offer of housing.
Succession of tenancy	When a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to any joint tenants, a partner or a close member of the tenant's family as long as they were living with the tenant at the time of the death and for at least 12 months before. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a successor.
Sustainable communities	The Department for Communities and Local Government says a sustainable community is a place where people want to live and work now and in the future.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This Allocation Policy explains the rules that determine how Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords allocate social housing properties and offer a variety of other housing options.
- 2.2 Derby City Council recognises that the availability of affordable rented accommodation will never meet the demand in the city. At the time of drafting this policy, the city had approximately 20,000 units of social housing – 14,000 Council houses and 6,000 Residential Social Landlord properties.
- 2.3 We expect that approximately 1,000 of these properties will be available for letting each year. At any time we will have between 7,000 and 12,000 people registered on the Housing Register.
- 2.4 This Allocation Policy guides the principles of how these houses will be allocated in a fair and transparent manner, taking account of both the Council's duty to take account of housing need and it's wish to offer as much choice as possible.
- 2.5 Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder landlords recognise that homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need. The impact of homelessness does have a detrimental impact on families, childless couples and single people. The Council will do all it can to prevent homelessness.
- 2.6 The Allocation Policy aims to:
- help people in housing need choose where they would like to live
 - prevent people from becoming statutory homeless.
 - make the best use of the limited social housing available and tell you about other housing options.
- 2.7 Allocation policies were first introduced under Part six of the Housing Act 1996. This type of policy provides a framework for councils to allocate accommodation, and to give people who have the greatest need of housing a reasonable choice about their property.
- 2.8 This Allocation Policy applies to:
- existing tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord, and
 - existing tenants who want to transfer from a secure tenancy with the Council to an assured tenancy with a residential social landlord and vice versa, and
 - new applicants.
- 2.9 The Council and the Derby Homefinder landlords are committed to equal opportunities and to making sure that everyone is treated fairly.

3.0 Statement of choice

- 3.1 Derby City Council believes in offering applicants on its Derby Homefinder Register the freedom to choose the properties they are interested in. The Derby Homefinder scheme gives all its applicants the freedom to express an interest in suitable accommodation that is available. The scheme also provides information and advice on other housing options to help applicants solve their housing needs.
- 3.2 Through this Allocation Policy, the Council aims to offer choice to applicants as well as meeting its legal duty to house people who have an urgent need for housing.

4.0 Equalities and diversity statement

- 4.1 Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords are committed to: promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity; and tackling social exclusion.
- 4.2 The Council approved its current Equality and Diversity Policy, called Achieving Equality and Valuing Diversity, in May 2005. You can get a copy of this policy by contacting 01332 255384, minicom 01332 258427 or by downloading it from www.derby.gov.uk
- 4.3 The Council is committed to doing its best to prevent the people it serves, from suffering unfair discrimination however caused. This includes:
- age
 - disability, including people living with AIDS/HIV
 - ethnic or national origin, race or colour
 - marital status
 - religious or political beliefs
 - responsibilities for children or dependants
 - gender and gender identity
 - sexuality
 - trade union activities
 - unrelated criminal convictions, where this is possible

This list is not exhaustive.

5.0 Data protection statement

- 5.1 You have the right to access the personal information we hold about you. We will use the information you provide for the purpose of re-housing. We may also use the information for issues of child protection, public protection and for preventing and detecting fraud and other criminal offences. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access your file, please contact Derby City Council's Data Protection Officer on 01332 256262 for an application form.

6.0 Legal framework

- 6.1 This Allocation Policy has been written to meet the duties of Part six of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 6.2 Part six of the Housing Act 1996 covers:
- allocating local authority properties to new tenants
 - transfers that are requested by local authority tenants
 - allocating local authority properties to current tenants of registered social landlords
 - nominations that the Council makes to registered social landlords.
- 6.3 The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, also sets out the housing circumstances of those applicants we must give reasonable preference to when we decide who will be offered a property.
- 6.4 This Policy takes account of the Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities.
- 6.5 There are instances where this Policy does not apply. These include:
- assignments/transfer of tenancy
 - mutual exchange
 - succession of tenancy.

This Policy does not apply to assignments, mutual exchanges or succession of tenancies. In each of these instances, neither the Council nor any of the other Derby Homefinder Landlords are required to identify a new tenant for the relevant property or properties from the Derby Homefinder register. A definition of each of these terms can be found in the 'Glossary and definition of terms' in Section 1.0.

7.0 Aims and objectives of this policy

- 7.1 The aim of this Allocation Policy and of having choice-based lettings is to help people with housing need choose where they would like to live and to prevent people from becoming statutory homeless. Any choice is subject to sections 14.0 and 15.0 of this policy.
- 7.2 The objectives of the Policy are:
1. to allow applicants to look for a property in the area of their choice
 2. to encourage common standards of working for all the partners of Derby Homefinder
 3. to reduce the number of properties refused by applicants
 4. to ensure properties are let as quickly as possible
 5. to reduce the number of difficult-to-let properties.

8.0 Housing providers working together

- 8.1 The Council and most of the registered social landlords, known as housing associations, who have homes to rent or buy in Derby are working together as

Derby Homefinder Landlords. They have all agreed to use this policy and to allocate properties through Derby Homefinder.

The Derby Homefinder Landlords are:

- Derby City Council – Derby Homes manages the Council's properties
- Anchor Trust Housing Association
- Derwent Living
- English Churches Housing Group
- FCH Housing and Care Housing Association
- Guinness Trust
- Hallmark Community Housing Association Ltd
- Home Housing Association Ltd
- Northern Counties Housing Association
- Raglan Housing Association
- Riverside Midlands
- Salvation Army Housing Association Ltd
- Tuntum
- Walbrook Housing Association
- William Sutton Trust.

See section 27.0 for full address and contact details.

- 8.2 Derby City Council will encourage other registered social landlords with homes in Derby to become Derby Homefinder Landlords and to sign up to this Allocation Policy.

9.0 Who can apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register?

- 9.1 The Derby Homefinder Landlords keep a joint housing register, called the Derby Homefinder Register. This means applicants only have to fill in one housing application form to be considered for housing by all the Derby Homefinder Landlords.
- 9.2 We will accept a completed housing application from people who are aged 16 or over. We do, however, have some rules that could affect an application – see sections 9.3.1 to 9.5.2 – and we can not accept applications from people in certain circumstances – see section 10.2 to 10.3.3.
- 9.3 **Local connection rule**
- 9.3.1 A local connection is a link to the city such as living, working, having close family, support or other special needs in the city.
- 9.3.2 If you do not have a local connection with Derby, you can still register for housing. However, this will mean that you will not be eligible for some properties advertised on Derby Homefinder.

9.4 Young people under-18 rule

9.4.1 You can apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register once you are 16. However, if you are under 18, after you register and before we offer you a home, we will expect you to attend an independent living interview.

9.4.2 If you are under 18 you must provide details of a guarantor otherwise a tenancy will not be offered to you.

9.5 Councillors, board members and employees and their close relatives rule

9.5.1 Councillors, board members and employees of Derby Homes, Derby City Council and the housing associations and their close relatives can apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register. However, they must make their position or relationship within the Council or with the Derby Homefinder Landlord known on their application form. If they do not do this and it is discovered later that such a relationship exist, then it will affect their tenancy.

9.5.2 The Council will neither give an advantage to nor disadvantage an applicant falling into this category. The other Derby Homefinder landlords have their own policies on lettings to some or all of those identified in 9.5.1. You may need to contact them to get details of their policies – see section 27.0.

10.0 Who cannot apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register?

10.1 We cannot accept applications to go on the Derby Homefinder Register from people in certain circumstances – see sections 10.2 to 10.3.3.

10.2 People from outside the United Kingdom

10.2.1 The Council cannot accept applications to go on the Derby Homefinder Register from:

- people who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- people from outside the United Kingdom who fail the habitual residence test
- people from outside the United Kingdom who are in breach of, or whose residence does not comply with, the European Union Rights of Residence Directive and statutory instruments.

10.2.2 If you are subject to section 10.2.1 the Council has no duty to offer you a home. We will offer you advice on your other housing options.

10.3 People who behave in an unacceptable way

10.3.1 We will accept your application to go on the Derby Homefinder Register but may not allocate you a property if you or a member of your household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, within the meaning set out in section 160A of the Housing Act 1996, which makes you unsuitable to be a tenant.

10.3.2 We will base any decision, in 10.3.1, not to allocate you a property on:

- any history of bad behaviour and
- any evidence of that behaviour that would justify a possession order being made against you had the behaviour been carried out while you were a tenant
- your current behaviour, or that of any member of your household, at the time of your application.

We will look at all the relevant factors to reach a decision.

10.3.3 We will tell you in writing if we cannot allocate you a property on the Derby Homefinder Register because of unacceptable behaviour. You have the right to ask for a review of the decision. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for more information. You can ask us to reconsider our decision at any time if you can demonstrate that your behaviour has changed and that you can sustain a tenancy.

11.0 How to join the Derby Homefinder Register

11.1 You need to fill in a housing application form, which you can get from a variety of places:

- from the Derby Homefinder website -www.derbyhomefinder.org

or contact/visit:

- the Housing Options Centre – see section 26.0 for details
- any Derby Homes Local Housing Office – see section 27.2 for details.

12.0 Housing application processing standards

12.1 When we get your housing application:

- we will let you know within five working days of receiving it
- if we need to visit you at home or arrange an office interview, we aim to contact you to arrange this within ten working days of receiving your application
- we aim to contact you within five working days of receiving your application to tell you if we need any extra proof to confirm your details
- we aim to contact you to confirm that your application is active within 28 days of receiving your form and all relevant information we require
- We will let you know if we can not register your application within 28 days of receiving your form. The delay may be due to us requiring additional information from you or another relevant agency.

12.2 Confirming your details

12.2.1 You need to give us all the information we ask for so that we can confirm your details. If you do not give us this information it will delay your application.

12.2.2 We will check all housing applications when they are received. We will make any

checks we consider necessary with current and former landlords, and other relevant agencies. If this information is not given to us quickly it may delay the processing of your application. We may also check your details with a credit-referencing agency. See section 5.0 on data protection for how we use and protect the information you give us.

- 12.2.3 It's your responsibility to give us the proof that we ask for to confirm your details. We will suspend your housing application until we get this information.
- 12.2.4 If, after a 28-day period, you have not given us the information we have asked for, we will have to cancel your housing application.
- 12.2.5 If you have given false and/or misleading information on your application form and during its processing, we will cancel your application. We may also take legal action against you. This action may include prosecuting you in the criminal courts.
- 12.2.6 You must say on your housing application form if you and/or other members of your household have current and past rent arrears or re-chargeable repairs from any Council or housing association tenancy. If you do not tell us this information and is later discovered, we may cancel your application and take legal action against you.
- 12.2.7 You must also tell us, and if possible provide evidence, why you have rent arrears or rechargeable repairs. You also need to provide evidence of payments made or arranged payment plans to reduce any arrears.
- 12.2.8 We may be able to offer advice or refer you to free money advice to help you reduce your debts.

13.0 How is a housing application assessed?

- 13.1 We assess your housing application based on the information you have given on the form and any other evidence or details you have provided.

We assess this information against the:

- Derby Homefinder Bands – see section 14
- Property eligibility table – see section 15.

13.2 Home visits and office interviews

- 13.2.1 If, when we assess a housing application, we need to get further information from you, we may have to arrange a home visit or office interview. We will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment.

13.3 Disability, mobility and medical needs

- 13.3.1 If you, a joint applicant, or other member of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application have:
 - a permanent physical disability
 - a mobility problem, or
 - a medical condition

we may need to do a further assessment.

13.3.2 This will help us to decide:

- whether your current home is having a detrimental impact on you or anyone in your household's health or mobility and
- what type of property would best suit you/their needs, if a move is necessary
- how to match your specific needs to properties that are adapted

13.3.3 You will still be able to express an interest in properties that do not have the adaptation you need. The Derby Homefinder Landlord may be able to adapt the property to your needs.

13.4 **Placing you in a different Derby Homefinder band**

13.4.1 In some cases, we may place your housing application in a different band than your circumstances call for – see section 14 for all bands. We may do this, for example, if you or anyone in your household has:

- abandoned a previous tenancy
- moved to new housing that is worse than your previous housing without good reason
- sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without getting other housing first.

13.4.2 If we think that you have deliberately made your own housing circumstances worse we will place your housing application in a different Derby Homefinder Band for 12 months from the date of application. The band we place you in will best reflect your housing needs from your previous accommodation.

13.5 **Owner-occupiers and applicants with enough resources to meet their own housing needs**

13.5.1 If you own a property or you have enough financial resources to enable you to get your own accommodation, you can still apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register.

13.5.2 However, due to the high demand for social housing in Derby, it is unlikely that we would make you an offer of housing. This may not apply if you are aged over 60 because there are generally a large number of properties for older people across the city. In any event, we would be able to tell you about other available housing options. See section 25 on Other Housing Options for further information.

13.6 **Community Safety**

13.6.1 The Council works in partnership with the Police, the Probation Service, the Community Safety Partnership, and housing providers to manage risk to the community.

13.6.2 If your application leads us to believe there are implications for community safety, we may refuse you housing in certain areas.

14.0 The Derby Homefinder Bands

14.1 We will categorise your housing circumstances into one of four bands.

The bands are:

Emergency Band	A Band	B Band	C Band
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14.2 There is a limited number of properties available each year. We aim to allocate a percentage of available properties to applicants from each band. The bands aim to deal with individual and multiple needs. We advertise properties to bands and give priority to applicants who we have placed into each band.

14.3 The Council, in consultation with the Derby Homefinder landlords, reserves the right to change the percentage of properties allocated in each band to meet the housing needs within the city every three months.

14.4 We will detail the percentage of allocations to each band on Derby Homefinder. This information will be available on the Derby Homefinder property list, published every week, and the website www.derbyhomefinder.org

14.5 **Emergency band**

14.5.1 We will place you in this band if:

- Derby City Council has accepted you are 'statutorily homeless'
- Housing Standards have assessed your property and:
 - found it to be 'statutorily overcrowded' and
 - you have not intentionally caused overcrowding, as defined in the Housing Act 1985.

14.5.2 See section 14.6 for details of homeless final offers.

14.5.3 See section 14.7 for details of the one offer policy for applicants found to be 'statutorily overcrowded'.

14.6 **Homeless final offers**

14.6.1 If, within three-months, you have not been successful in getting permanent housing, the Council reserves the right to make you a final offer of suitable housing.

14.6.2 If you feel that a final offer property is not suitable, you may ask for a review of the offer. You can ask for a review whether or not you accept the final offer.

14.6.3 You may refuse a 'final offer' of housing. If you do then the Council's obligation to find you a new home will change and you will lose your emergency status and be moved to a new band that reflects your housing need. If you are not sure about

refusing a final offer, you can discuss it with your Housing Advisor at the Housing Options Centre.

14.6.4 When reviewing a final offer, the Council will check that:

- the property is of the right size and type for your family
- the property is safe for you to live in – that it is not in a dangerous condition
- it takes account of any special needs you or your family have
- we have taken into account any other relevant circumstances you have told us about before we made a decision.

14.7 **One-offer policy for statutorily overcrowded applicants**

14.7.1 If we make you an offer of suitable housing and you refuse it during the three-month period, we will review our decision to place you in the Emergency Band.

14.8 **A band**

14.8.1 We will place you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of people identified on your housing application in this band if:

- Derby City Council has accepted you as ‘non-statutorily homeless’
- the Council prohibits the use of the property you are living under the terms of the Housing Act 2004 and considers that it is not reasonable for the property to be brought back into use
- the Council’s medical advisor or Occupational Therapist has assessed you as having an essential need to move on medical or mobility grounds. This is because your current housing is having a serious detrimental impact on you or members of your households health or ability to live independently
- you have an urgent need to move on welfare grounds. This is defined as:
 - your discharge from hospital is prevented by your housing situation
 - there is a likelihood of admission to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made
 - there is a likelihood of a child being accommodated by the local authority if re-housing is not made
 - you, or a member of your household, are at serious risk of harm in your present accommodation. This can include but is not limited to:
 - victims of domestic violence
 - serious racial harassment
 - homophobic attacks
 - witnesses of crime
 - victims of crime
 - serious anti-social behaviour.
- you have an urgent need to move to a particular locality where failure to do so would cause hardship to you or other member of your household. This is defined as:

- it is unreasonable for you to stay at your current accommodation due to exceptional financial hardship
- you need to move to either give or receive essential care and support
- you need to move to access specialised medical treatment
- you need to move to take up particular employment or training opportunities
- you are currently living in a hostel or supported housing and are ready for independent living
- you are currently living in a house owned by a Derby Homefinder Landlord that is too big for your needs, and you are willing to move to a smaller property
- you are a tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and no longer need the adaptations made to your property

In all circumstances – you cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for yourself.

14.9 **B band**

14.9.1 We will place you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application in this band if:

- the Council's medical advisor or an Occupational Therapist has assessed you as having a need to move on medical or mobility grounds
- you currently live in an upper floor flat and you have children under 12 years of age
- you need more bed spaces
- you are sharing facilities
- you have had a relationship breakdown, and are living in the same property as your partner and a move would allow the partner and family to remain in the property
- you are a tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and have received a Compulsory Purchase Order or your property is due for demolition
- you are suffering from anti-social behaviour or harassment
- you have a non-urgent housing need to move. This can include but is not limited to a move nearer to:
 - a child's school
 - a place of worship
 - family/friends for non-essential support
 - shops and other local amenities.

In all circumstances – you cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for yourself.

14.10 C band

14.10.1 We will place you in this band if:

- you are already adequately housed
- you can afford to get your own housing or improve your current accommodation to be more suitable to your needs.

14.11 Applicants with multiple needs

14.11.1 We take account of multiple needs in this policy.

14.11.2 When we receive your Derby Homefinder application we will assess you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of you identified on your form. We will give priority to individuals and families with multiple needs.

14.11.3 We will instruct, if necessary, a designated officer to assess your needs. The 'Assessing Housing Applications' procedure details which officer/team will assess each need.

14.12 Reviewing banding

14.12.1 Applicants in any band have the right to ask us to review their banding by contacting the Housing Options Centre. See section 26.0 for details.

14.12.2 We will regularly review all of the housing applications that we place in the Emergency Band.

15.0 Property eligibility table

- 15.1 The size and type of property we normally offer you will depend on the size of your household. This table only gives a general guide.

	Studio flat	1 bedroom flat	1 bedroom bungalow	1 bedroom house	2 bedroom flat	2 bedroom maisonette	2 bedroom bungalow	2 bedroom house	3 bedroom flat	3 bedroom maisonette	3 bedroom bungalow	3 bedroom house	4 bedroom house	5 bedroom house
Single person under 60 years	✓	✓		✓										
Single person over 60 years	✓	✓	✓	✓										
Single person or couple expecting a baby					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Single person under 60 with access to children					✓									
Couple with no children, under 60 years		✓		✓										
Couple with no children, over 60 years		✓	✓	✓										
Couple under 60 with access to children					✓									
Household with one child					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Household with two children of the same sex under ten					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Household with two children of the same sex, one or more over ten					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with two children of different sexes					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with three children									✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with four or more children									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- 15.2 Similar properties can differ in the size of bedrooms and the ideal number of occupants. We will tell you which size of property we consider is most suitable for you when we accept your housing application. We will advertise properties with the minimum and maximum number of occupants.
- 15.3 We will advertise a property with a mobility group if the Derby Homefinder landlord identifies it as being suitable to meet the needs of an applicant, or another member of their household, with disabilities or mobility needs.

- 15.4 We normally offer you accommodation with an extra bedroom if you have a permanent carer or a medical condition that means you need an extra room.
- 15.5 If you are getting Disability Living Allowance the Derby Homefinder landlords may offer you a property that's normally for someone over 60 – even if you are younger. We will advertise the property with details of the age of the persons who could apply. For example, receiving Disability Living Allowance and over 50 years of age.

16.0 Contacting you about your housing application

- 16.1 Once we have made all our assessments, we will write to you and tell you:
- that we have accepted your housing application and you can start to look for properties advertised on Derby Homefinder
 - your unique housing application number for you and your family
 - the Derby Homefinder band we have placed you in
 - if you have been awarded a multiple, twin or single need
 - the date we place you in the band
 - the mobility group we have placed you in, if this applies
 - the type and size of properties for which you qualify
 - how to use the Derby Homefinder scheme to look for properties
 - whether you have a local connection with Derby and how this effects your eligibility for properties
 - the terms of the scheme and details of your rights and responsibilities under the scheme.

17.0 How Derby Homefinder works

- 17.1 Derby Homefinder advertises a variety of properties, including:

- social housing for rent
- private landlord housing for rent
- low-cost home ownership properties, such as shared ownership.

It also offers a 'mutual exchange scheme' for its applicants who already have a tenancy with any Derby Homefinder Landlord.

- 17.2 We advertise properties to create an open and clear allocation scheme. This also allows you to choose which properties you would be willing to accept, if offered.
- 17.3 All properties available are advertised on Derby Homefinder every Wednesday from 12 noon. The property advertisements close on Tuesday at midnight.

- 17.4 During the weekly advertising cycle, you can express your interest in up to six properties. Expressing an interest in a property means that your name will appear on the shortlist for that property.
- 17.5 If you do not express an interest, your name will not appear on the shortlist for that property.
- 17.6 Each Derby Homefinder landlord allocates their own properties from the shortlists provided by Derby Homefinder.
- 17.7 Derby Homefinder will provide information on how properties were allocated.
- 17.8 For more information on Derby Homefinder, visit www.derbyhomefinder.org, telephone 01332 716677, or e-mail derby.homefinder@derby.gov.uk

18.0 Advertised properties on Derby Homefinder

- 18.1 Each Derby Homefinder Landlord is responsible for describing and labelling its properties on Derby Homefinder.
- 18.2 Each property will be advertised with:
- the criteria for eligibility
 - property details.
- 18.3 We will advertise each property to applicants from at least one band.
- 18.4 If you do not meet the criteria for a property, you will not be able to express interest in that property.
- 18.5 **Property details**
- 18.5.1 To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, we will advertise all properties with information on size, location and features. The adverts will also include:
- which Derby Homefinder Landlord owns the property
 - landlord contact details for further information
 - weekly rent and any other charges
 - if known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
 - the closing date for applicants to express an interest
 - other available information on the property.
- 18.6 **Furnished tenancies**
- 18.6.1 We may advertise some properties as 'furnished tenancies'. These properties are designed to meet the needs of people on low incomes who do not have any

furniture or would struggle to meet the costs of buying furniture.

18.6.2 There are several different types of furnished tenancies available:

- **fully-furnished tenancies** - these include carpets, curtains, beds, wardrobes, tables, chairs, cooker, fridge-freezer and so on
- **electrical goods only** - these include fridge-freezer, cooker and washing machine.

18.6.3 Furnished tenancies cost more, so the advertised weekly rent will be higher than other similar sized properties.

18.7 Grouped property advertisements

18.7.1 At times, we will group some properties together and advertise them with one reference number on Derby Homefinder. In these cases, you would only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties within the group.

18.7.2 This situation would happen, for example:

- a new development of the same type of properties
- an existing scheme where there are empty properties of the same size and type.

19.0 Expressing an interest in advertised properties

19.1 You can express an interest by:

- internet – www.derbyhomefinder.org
- automated telephone service
- one of six kiosks located around Derby
- visiting the Housing Options Centre or any Derby Homes local housing office.

You can get further information by contacting the Derby Homefinder team on 01332 716677 or visiting our website www.derbyhomefinder.org

19.2 Derby Homefinder has the facility to allow you to view or hear your position on a shortlist before you express an interest in the property. The Derby Homefinder information leaflet gives details of how to do this. See section 19.1 for details on how to contact Derby Homefinder.

20.0 Allocating properties

20.1 A shortlist is created once the advertising period has ended.

20.2 We sort the shortlist by:

- a the Derby Homefinder Band
- b needs
- c the date you were placed in the band.

In cases where a number of applicants have the same level of need we will offer a

property to the applicant who has been waiting the longest.

20.3 At all times, the landlord is responsible for allocating properties.

20.4 When allocating, the Derby Homefinder landlord gives preference, where possible, to applicants who specifically need the services or facilities that are part of the property.

20.5 **Bypassing**

20.5.1 The Derby Homefinder Landlord's have the right to 'bypass' an applicant if they do not feel they are suitable. Their decision to bypass may be because of their own policies and procedures.

20.5.2 You will not automatically be by-passed for rent arrears or rechargeable repairs. The Derby Homefinder landlords' decision to bypass you will vary depending on their own policies and procedures. Normally you will need to be able to show that you have made satisfactory payment arrangements to repay the debt.

20.5.3 If a Derby Homefinder Landlord bypasses you, we suggest that you contact the Derby Homefinder team on 01332 716677 for further details.

20.5.4 If you disagree with any decision and want to complain, please see section 24 - Making a Complaint.

20.6 **Offers**

20.6.1 The landlord will contact the successful applicant with details of the potential offer. Each landlord may have a different process.

20.6.2 All Derby Homefinder Landlords reserve the right to:

- carry out checks on your personal circumstances, as well as those made as part of your housing application
- withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not on your housing application
- make offers to more than one applicant on properties to make sure that the property is let as quickly as possible.

20.6.3 If you are under 18 years of age you will not be offered a property unless you have had an independent living interview and can provide details of a guarantor.

20.6.4 You must tell the Derby Homefinder Landlords whether you wish to accept the offer. There will be deadlines for responding to offers.

20.7 **Special initiatives and 'sensitive' allocations**

20.7.1 We may hold back some properties from the Derby Homefinder scheme to make allocations that are at our discretion to support 'estate sustainability' and other corporate initiatives.

20.7.2 The Derby Homefinder Landlords have the discretion to offer properties to their

existing tenants who are in exceptional housing circumstances. The decision to make an offer of housing will be made in conjunction with the Housing Options Manager. Once the tenant has moved, the vacated property will always be advertised on Derby Homefinder.

20.7.3 In some cases, the Derby Homefinder Landlords, together with Derby City Council, may decide to let properties within a local area or new development on a slightly different basis from normal. This would be done to help create 'sustainable communities' within an area.

20.7.4 We will advertise any properties that fall into this category and, where possible, will set out the criteria – the factors we have taken into account – for doing this.

20.8 **Monitoring allocations**

20.8.1 Derby Homefinder will regularly monitor the percentage of properties allocated to each of the bands.

21.0 **Non-secure tenancies**

21.1 All new tenancies within Derby City Council properties, managed by Derby Homes, will be 'introductory tenancies'. You can get further information about these tenancies from any Derby Homes Local Housing Office – see section 27.2.

21.2 Introductory tenancies aim to make sure that, during the first 12 months of a tenancy, people act responsibly and comply with the conditions of the tenancy agreement. If there are no problems during that period, an introductory tenant automatically becomes a 'secure tenant'.

21.3 The Council and Derby Homes may extend the first 12-month period of an introductory tenancy by a further six months if you do not keep to your terms and conditions of tenancy. Alternatively, the Council may seek to evict you if you do not keep to the terms and conditions of tenancy.

21.4 The other Derby Homefinder Landlords reserve the right to offer an assured short-hold tenancy.

21.5 You will always be told whether you are being offered an introductory or assured short-hold tenancy, and of any other conditions attached, before you sign the tenancy agreement.

22.0 **Changes to your housing application**

22.1 You must let us know if the circumstances of you, a joint applicant, or other members of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application change as this may affect the band we have placed you in.

22.2 **Change of circumstances**

22.2.1 This can include but is not limited to:

- a change of address

- a change of contact telephone details
- people leaving your household or more people coming into your household
- your health getting better or worse.

22.2.2 If we later discover a change in your circumstances that you have not detailed to us it could affect your housing application and/or you could be in breach of your tenancy.

22.2.3 It remains your responsibility to check with us whether or not a change of circumstances is relevant and/or affects your banding.

22.2.4 We may need you to fill in a change of circumstances form so that we can do a new assessment of your Derby Homefinder Band.

22.2.5 If there is a change in circumstances we may have to change your band and the date you were placed in the band. We will always write to tell you of any changes we make to your banding.

22.2.6 Derby City Council tenants should contact their Derby Homes Local Housing Office – See Section 27.0 for details. Other applicants should contact the Housing Options Centre – See section 26.0 for details.

22.2.7 We aim to process your change of circumstances within 28 days of receiving all the information we need from you and other relevant agencies.

22.3 **A change in your needs**

22.3.1 If you, or a member of your households needs change you can ask us to review your Derby Homefinder Band.

22.3.2 If you have previously completed a medical assessment form and your housing circumstances change, you will need to fill in a new form. This is because the Derby Homefinder Band takes into account how housing impacts on the medical problem rather than the medical problem itself.

22.4 **Derby Homefinder Register review**

22.4.1 We will carry out a review of the Derby Homefinder Register every year.

22.4.2 We do this review to make sure that:

- the number of applicants on the register reflects the immediate needs for social housing
- applicants still want to stay on the register, and
- applicants' details are accurate and up-to-date.

22.5 **Cancelling your housing application**

22.5.1 Your housing application will be cancelled if, for example:

- you have asked us to cancel it
- you have not replied to our review letter
- you have been re-housed by a Derby Homefinder Landlord
- you have moved and not told us of your new address
- we have contacted you and you have not responded within 28 days
- you have given false or misleading information on your housing application
- you have not given us all the information we have asked for to support your application within 28 days.

22.5.2 If we cancel your application, we will tell you why in writing. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for more information.

22.6 **Suspending Your Housing Application**

22.6.1 We could suspend your housing application if, for example:

- you are not eligible for an allocation under section 10.3 of this policy
- you have been assessed by The Housing Options Centre or any other relevant support agency and it is determined that you are not ready for independent living
- there are reasons why you cannot move - for instance, you are due to go into hospital
- you need housing with support and are refusing a support package to help you keep up your tenancy
- we have written to you asking for information to support your application and we are waiting for your reply
- we have written to a support agency or worker to request information about you and are waiting for a reply.

22.6.2 If we suspend your housing application, we will tell you why in writing. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for further information.

23.0 **Your right to a review**

23.1 The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, gives you the right to ask for a review if we decide not to allow you to join the Housing Register or make any decision that affects your housing application.

23.2 **To request a review**

23.2.1 You, or your representative, must make your request to the Housing Options Manager at the Housing Options Centre in writing within 21 days of getting our

written decision. You, or your representative, may give your reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell us your reasons in writing. We will give you a form of receipt that acknowledges your contact with us.

23.3 The decision about your review

- 23.3.1 A senior officer, who has not been involved in the original decision, will look at your request for a review.
- 23.3.2 The officer will base his or her decision on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, they may need to ask you for more information to help them make a decision.
- 23.3.3 They will write to you about their decision and explain their reasons for it within 28 days.

24.0 Making a complaint

24.1 The Housing Options Centre

- 24.1.1 We are committed to giving you the best possible housing service. We will always try and get it right, but we need you to tell us if we are getting it wrong.
- 24.1.2 If you are unhappy with the service the Housing Options Centre provides please contact them to try to get the problem settled there and then. If you telephone or visit them please ask for the names of the people you speak to.
- 24.1.3 If you are not satisfied with the reply, you should write to the Senior Housing Advisor of Customer Services. You will receive a written response to your complaint within 21 days.
- 24.1.4 If you are still not satisfied with the response, you need to get the 'Making a Complaint about Council Services' form, available from the Housing Options Centre or the Council House, Corporation Street, Derby.
- 24.1.5 The Council's Corporate Complaints Officer will independently investigate your complaint.
- 24.1.6 If you are unhappy with the Corporate Complaints Officer's reply, you can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. This is an independent service run by central government to make sure that local authorities provide a certain standard of service to their customers – see 24.2.2 for contact details.

24.2 Complaints against Derby Homefinder Landlords

- 24.2.1 If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have not been given a professional service by any Derby Homefinder Landlord, you should complain directly to them. All the Derby Homefinder Landlords have their own formal complaints policies and procedures.
- 24.2.2 If you have followed the Derby Homefinder Landlords complaints procedure but are still unhappy, you can contact:

- the Local Government Ombudsman for complaints about Derby Homes

Local Government Ombudsman
Beverley House, 17 Shipton
Road, York YO30 5FZ

Telephone: 01904 380200
Fax: 01904 380269

- the Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about registered social landlords.

Norman House
105 – 109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA

Telephone: 020 7836 3630
Fax: 020 7836 3900

25.0 Other housing options

25.1 We offer other housing options. This includes providing information on:

25.2 Low cost home ownership

25.2.1 There are a range of low cost home ownership products which are intended to help people buy a home that they would otherwise not be able to afford. These products are known as HomeBuy.

25.2.2 There are three parts to the HomeBuy scheme:

25.2.3 **New Build HomeBuy** – where you share ownership of your home with a housing association. You buy a share of a property, usually 25%, 50% or 75% by way of a mortgage or cash payment, and pay rent on the remainder.

25.2.4 **Open Market HomeBuy** – where you part-buy a property and get a loan from a housing association for the rest. You will need to use your own money and raise a mortgage for around 75% of the cost of the property. The housing association will provide an interest free equity loan of up to £50,000 to cover the balance. Please note that funds for this scheme are limited.

25.2.5 **Social HomeBuy** – where housing association and local authority tenants are helped to buy their current home, either outright or on shared ownership terms with the benefit of a discount. Social HomeBuy does not apply to all tenants as the landlord must have decided to take part in the scheme.

25.2.6 If you would like further information on these schemes, including whether you are eligible to apply, you need to contact EMHomebuy on 0844 892 0112 or www.emhomebuy.org.uk

25.2.7 As a 'HomeBuy' agent they help people in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and

Derbyshire access low cost home ownership schemes, and provide information and advice relating to the different products available.

25.3 **Right to buy**

- 25.3.1 The Right to Buy scheme allows you, as a council tenant, to buy your home for less than its full market value. The length of time you have been a tenant is used to decide on the level of discount you are given.
- 25.3.2 The rules on right to buy are complex. You can contact the Housing Options Centre for further information. Alternatively, you can download a leaflet on right to buy from the Department for Communities and Local Government website www.odpm.gov.uk

25.4 **Mutual exchange**

- 25.4.1 A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each party moving permanently into the other partner's property.

25.5 **Private landlord properties**

- 25.5.1 Derby Homefinder advertises private landlord properties that are available to rent. The Council's Housing Standards team inspects each property before advertising to ensure it meets their standards.

25.6 **Bond Bank Scheme**

- 25.6.1 The Bond Bank scheme helps people who cannot afford a deposit or rent in advance when they want to rent a home in the private sector.

The Council provides a written guarantee to your new landlord. This gives you six months to save up the deposit for your landlord.

You can get more information by contacting the Housing Options Centre.

25.7 **Derby Care Link**

- 25.7.1 Derby Care Link is a monitoring service provided by the Council.
- 25.7.2 Some of the services provided by Derby Care Link are:
- personal alarm buttons
 - smoke alarm sensors
 - bogus caller buttons
 - personal fall detectors
 - home flood detectors
 - regular courtesy calls and home visits.
- 25.7.3 You can pick and choose which services would help you. The services provide you with the reassurance and peace of mind you need to live your life independently.
- 25.7.4 You can get more information by contacting Derby Care Link by:

- telephone 01332 256062
- Minicom 01332 292165
- E-mail carelink@derby.gov.uk

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26.0 Derby City Council

Housing Options Centre

Bio House
Derwent Street
Derby
DE1 2ED
Tel: 01332 716483 / 716484

27.0 Derby Homefinder Landlords

27.1 Registered Social Landlords

Anchor Trust

Milestone Place
100 Bolton Road
Bradford BD1 4DH
Tel: 01274 381600

Northern Counties

Housing Association

Unit 2
Holmewood Business Park
Chesterfield Road
Holmewood
Derbyshire S42 5US
Tel: 01246 593100

Derwent Living

1 Centro Place
Pride Park
Derby DE24 8RF
Tel: 01332 346477

Raglan Housing Association Ltd

22-24 Oxford Road
Bournemouth
Dorset BH8 8EZ
Tel: 0845 070 7772

English Churches Housing Group

Suites 1 and 2
First Floor Chatsworth House
Prime Business Centre
Raynesway
Derby DE21 7SR
Tel: 0845 0707073

Riverside Midlands

Riverside House
49 Western Boulevard
Leicester LE2 7HN
Tel: 0845 330 4900

FCH Housing and Care

25 Queen Street
Iron Gate
Derby DE1 3DS
Tel: 01332 223800

Salvation Army

Housing Association Ltd

Jarodale House
7 Gregory Boulevard
Nottingham NG7 6LD
Tel: 0845 3000 008

Guinness Trust

38 Moyne Gardens
Chellaston
Derby DE73 6UE
Tel: 01332 704742

Tuntum Housing Association

90 Beech Avenue
New Basford
Nottingham NG7 7LW
Tel: 0115 916 6066

Hallmark Community

Housing Association Ltd

8 Charnwood Street

Walbrook Housing Association Ltd

Walbrook Housing Association
New Enterprise House

Derby DE1 2GT
Tel: 01332 614700

St Helens Street
Derby DE1 3GY
Tel: 01332 375800

Home Housing
2 St Andrews House
Vernon Gate
Derby DE1 1UJ
Tel: 01332 294505

William Sutton Housing Association
East Divisional Office
Barton House
49 North Moor Road
Huntington
York YO32 9YY
Tel: 01904 750044

27.2 **Derby Homes**

Derby Homes
Floor 2 South Point
Cardinal Square
10 Nottingham Road
Derby DE1 3QT
Central allocations Tel: TBC
Contact Centre Tel: 01332 711000

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