

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2025

General Public Services and Community
Engagement Committee - 01/07/2025

Housing Allocations Policy Review 2025 – Approval for public consultation

(ADCCC)

PART I

1 Summary

- 1.1 The council's Housing Allocations Policy sets out how the council will allocate social/ affordable rented accommodation, via the council's Housing Register.
- 1.2 Committee is asked to review and provide comment on the changes recommended to this Policy and provide approval for a four-week (minimum) public consultation on these recommended changes.
- 1.3 The updated Policy can be found at Appendix One.
- 1.4 A detailed comparison document outlining the changes recommended to the Policy and the justification for these recommended changes can be found at Appendix Two.

2 Details

- 2.1 Certain changes to the Policy are required, due to updated Government guidance within the sector and legislative reform.
- 2.2 Other changes have been recommended that aim to provide additional clarity to our customers, improve officer efficiency and to adopt best practice for specific cohort/s engaging with the council's Housing Service.
- 2.3 The changes recommended to the Policy are outlined below –
 - 2.3.1 Section 1.5 of the Policy states that the service standards that you can expect from the council's Housing Service can be found on the council's website. These service standards are no longer listed on the website, therefore, the section has been removed.
 - 2.3.2 The council will retain the local connection criteria for customers supporting family members with significant care or support needs within the district as set out within the current Policy. However, we have introduced a new requirement to this criteria that the customer must be able to demonstrate to the council that the distance they currently travel to provide this care and support is unreasonable, or creates a barrier to delivering effective care or assistance.
(2.2.1)
 - 2.3.3 Within the current Policy the exemptions to the local connection criteria for certain Armed Forces veterans (and family members) and all other cohorts are listed within Section 2.2.1.

The new Policy contains a new Section (2.2.2 – Armed Forces Exemptions) that lists updated exemptions specifically for Armed Forces veterans. These exemptions to the local connection criteria for Armed Forces veterans have been updated in line with Government guidance.

- 2.3.4 Section 2.2.3 of the Policy (Housing Need) has been updated to adhere with our current procedure regarding the process of the potential award of medical banding. This addition confirms to customers that following any recommendation of medical priority banding by the council's independent medical advisor to be awarded to an application, any decision to award medical priority banding will be taken by the council's Housing Solutions Manager.
- 2.3.5 The exception for customers aged 60 years or over with a local connection to require no housing need to join the council's Housing Register to bid for sheltered accommodation remains, however, the age limit has been lowered to aged 55 or over. This reflects the fact that most Registered Providers now advertise available sheltered accommodation within the district to those aged 55 or over. (2.2.3)
- 2.3.6 For the council to consider an application to the council's Housing Register from a customer who owns a property but are experiencing financial difficulty, a requirement has been introduced to ensure this customer is engaging with the council's Housing Options team. (2.2.4)
- 2.3.7 Section 3.8 of the Policy (Home Visits) has been amended to confirm to customers that any visit to their property may be conducted as a scheduled visit, at short notice or unannounced. If the customer is unavailable for a scheduled visit if required, any offer of accommodation will be subject to reconsideration. Clarification has been added to ensure that customers are aware that access to all areas of the property must be granted during any home visit conducted.
- 2.3.8 Certain Armed Forces veterans, who as per legislation must be awarded reasonable preference (4.1), will be awarded a Band C priority on the council's Housing Register. (4.2)
- 2.3.9 In addition to the customers currently listed within section 4.2 of the Policy who may receive additional priority on the council's Housing Register if certain criteria are filled, a customer who has served in the Armed Forces who has joined the Housing Register as they have a housing need, however, are not currently homeless, will be awarded additional priority.

This priority will be awarded by backdating their band start date by 2 years.

- 2.3.10 The council's Domestic Abuse Caseworker post is now specifically mentioned within the relevant sections of the Policy. (5.2)
- 2.3.11 Additional clarification has been added to help customers understand the affordability criteria set by our Registered Providers and a requirement added for customers that evidence of the benefit entitlement required to cover the rent of a property with an extra bedroom is provided to the council before the household is able to bid on a property with an extra bedroom to their requirement. (5.10)
- 2.3.12 If medical priority is granted for ground floor accommodation, the customer who has been granted this priority will only be considered for accommodation of this type (no external or internal stairs) (5.11)

- 2.3.13 The council's Senior Housing Options Officer post that is referenced within the Policy no longer exists and has been replaced by the council's Housing Solutions Manager. Therefore, any reference to this title has been removed and replaced with the new post title.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree that the recommended changes to the council's Housing Allocations Policy progress to a four-week (minimum) public consultation.

This will ensure that the Council are compliant with updated legislation and Government guidance, able provide additional clarity to our customers, improve officer efficiency and adopt best practice for specific cohort/s engaging with the council's Housing Service.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.
- 4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators.
- 4.2.1 HN01 – Maximum number of households living in temporary accommodation on the last day of the quarter.
- 4.2.2 HN03 – Maximum number of households in temporary accommodation throughout the year.
- 4.2.3 HN06 – Promote access to the private sector lettings in order to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 4.2.4 HN11 – Percentage of households prevented or relieved from homelessness.

- 4.3 The impact of the recommendations on this/these performance indicator(s) is:

The implementation of the council's Housing Allocations Policy and the allocation of the available social housing within the district has a direct impact on the achievement of the above performance indicators. The Policy enables the council to allocate social housing to households most in need, including those who are currently homeless and placed within temporary accommodation by the council.

Financial, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

None specific.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Approval of an updated Housing Allocations Policy will ensure that the council is complaint with relevant legislation and adhere to current Government guidance.

6 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 6.1 A short Equality Impact Assessment is contained within the appendices for this report. It is not anticipated that the updated Policy will have any negative impact on the groups with protected characteristics.

7 Communications and Website Implications

- 7.1 Communications support will be required to produce the public consultation on the changes proposed. Further support from Communications will be required to manage the consultation whilst it is ongoing and collate the responses to this consultation for review post consultation.

8 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 8.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 8.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Housing Services service plan(s). Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
The council do not adopt an updated Housing Allocations Policy.	The council's Housing Allocations Policy would be out of date therefore, not compliant with current legislation and lack adherence to updated Government guidance.	For council to adopt an updated Housing Allocations Policy	Tolerate	2

- 8.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Likelihood Very	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16

	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Low ----- Impact ► Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)
3 (Critical)
2 (Significant)
1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Remote (≤5%))

- 8.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 That Committee agree the recommended changes to the council's Housing Allocations Policy are progressed to a four-week (minimum) public consultation.

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Data Quality

Data sources:

N/A

Data checked by:

N/A

Data rating:

N/A

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Short EIA assessment
SIA Assessment
Housing Allocations Policy 2025
Housing Allocations Policy 2025 Comparison Document

