

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: CABINET

Date and Time: WEDNESDAY, 3 APRIL 2019, AT 10.00 AM*

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER, APPLETREE COURT,
LYNDHURST

Telephone enquiries to: Lyndhurst (023) 8028 5000
023 8028 5588 - ask for Jan Debnam
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Cabinet's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
 - (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item.
- Speeches may not exceed three minutes. Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above.

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2019 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. PROPOSED HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2023: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (Pages 1 - 32)

To consider the responses received to the consultation on the proposed Strategy, together with consequent amendments to be made, and to recommend the Strategy to the Council for adoption.

5. PROPOSED HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY - OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (Pages 33 - 122)

To consider the responses received to the consultation on the proposed Strategy, to note that no changes are necessary as a result of the consultation responses, and to recommend the Strategy to the Council for adoption.

6. CREATIVE PEOPLE PLACES APPLICATION (Pages 123 - 128)

To be advised of a bid for funding under the Arts Council's Creative People Places Fund and to consider whether this Council should explore acting as the host for the development officer.

7. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 2018/19 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN (Pages 129 - 136)

To consider the provisional outturn on the 2018/19 budget.

To:

Councillors

Mrs D E Andrews
J E Binns
Mrs J L Cleary
M R Harris

Councillors

E J Heron (Vice-Chairman)
J D Heron
Mrs A J Hoare
B Rickman (Chairman)

PROPOSED HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 – 2023 - OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2018 the Council undertook a review of the Housing Options Service and the response to homelessness in the District. The review was undertaken with the assistance of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group and the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The result of this review recommended an assessment of the homelessness situation in the District, in order to formulate a new strategy to prevent homelessness and provide suitable accommodation solutions to homeless households in order to effectively discharge of the Council's statutory duties.
- 1.2 In December 2018 the proposed Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy ("the Strategy") was considered by both Cabinet and Full Council who gave approval for the statutory consultation exercise to commence.
- 1.3 This report sets out the outcome of the consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002 all local authorities are required to publish a homelessness strategy. As the last homelessness strategy was approved in 2003, it is important that an up to date strategy is in place.
- 2.2 Under s3(8) of the Homelessness Act 2002 before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.
- 2.3 Under s3(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 the Council must consult with any agency responsible for an action contained within the strategy.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 On the 15 January 2019 the Council opened its consultation on the Strategy. The proposed strategy and a questionnaire were made available on the Housing Section of the Council's website. The consultation ended at 5pm on 20 February 2019.
- 3.2 The following groups were also specifically invited to consult on the Strategy:
 - (a) Statutory, non-statutory agencies and organisations delivering services to vulnerable people in the District.
 - (b) All private registered providers of social housing;
- 3.3 The Service Manager for Housing Options also visited the Job Centre Plus in Ringwood, a Care Leavers' Team Meeting and a Community Mental Health Team Meeting to promote the consultation. A presentation on the Strategy was also given to the Tenant Involvement Group and Homelessness Multi-Agency Forum.

- 3.4 During the consultation period the Service Manager for Housing Options has also responded to a request from Hampshire County Council Children's Services for assistance to review the joint protocol for 16/17 year old homeless people which, coincidentally, is also an action contained within the Strategy requiring their support to achieve.
- 3.5 The Consultation received 24 responses. 8 responses were from the following organisations:
- a) NHS
 - b) The You Trust
 - c) The Handy Trust
 - d) Acts For Sharing
 - e) Citizens Advice New Forest
 - f) Two Saints
 - g) Community First New Forest
 - h) Tenant Involvement Group (TIG)
- 3.6 The remaining responses were from members of the public or elected Members.
- 3.7 A summary of the responses received, including a summary of the comments made on the Strategy and the Council's responses to them is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The consultation outcome showed the majority to be in support of the Strategy; with 83% or more of the respondents approving each of the four key strategic priorities.
- 3.9 Following the review of consultation responses two further actions have been added to Strategic Priority 2 to ensure support to both victims of domestic abuse and households with complex needs is identified and provided.
- 3.10 An action to recognise 'Hidden Homeless' households and work with voluntary agencies to provide them access to housing assistance has also been added to Strategic Priority 2. An action to support ongoing refuge provision has been added to Strategic Priority 3 in accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance.
- 3.11 The statistics within the final proposed Strategy, at Appendix 2, have been updated to reflect the up-to-date homelessness situation both locally and nationally, given the first draft of the Strategy was completed in September 2018 and other national statistics were not available at that time.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The majority of respondents to the consultation expressed support for the four key strategic priorities contained within the Strategy. Looking at the consultation responses as a whole, it is important to have in mind the Council's commitment within the Strategy to provide its own emergency accommodation and support workers, providing a comprehensive solution to immediate homelessness.
- 4.2 Further, responses have provided insight into how partnerships and other agencies can help deliver the actions within the priorities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An increased focus on early intervention and partnership working resulting from the actions in both the homelessness and housing strategies, along with the Council

sourcing more of its own emergency temporary accommodation should bring about a more efficient use of the current homelessness budget including a reduction in external Bed & Breakfast spend.

- 5.2 To achieve a number of the key actions contained within the Strategy there is a requirement to complement the existing Homelessness and Advice Officer Team with Support Officers who will provide more dedicated welfare support to guide applicants along a pathway to sustaining accommodation and to support rough sleepers through accommodation pathways. These additional resources are likely to be met from within the overall homelessness budget, which will be kept under careful review.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Ensuring that the right support is provided to homeless people at the right time will reduce any real or perceived crime and disorder issues that may arise from time to time.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This Strategy is for the benefit of all of the Council's residents as set out in the key objectives above and will have a positive impact by focusing the Council's resources to take a more proactive approach to the prevention of homelessness. Consideration has been given to the needs of those who identify with protected characteristic groups; in particular those with disabilities (both physical and mental health) who may find it difficult to access the Council's services. However, the Council has implemented partnership working with other agencies through the Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum and will develop further pathways which seek to identify and work with those who require support and assistance to prevent or relieve their homelessness.
- 8.2 This Strategy must be read alongside the Council's other key housing initiatives including the Housing Strategy and the new proposed Allocations Policy which will all provide a means to meet the housing needs of those within these protected characteristic groups. It is recognised that the way in which the Strategy is implemented and the impact on those with a protected characteristic will need to be regularly monitored to ensure that those residents are able to take advantage of the Strategy's key objectives.

9. HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL'S COMMENTS

- 9.1 The Panel noted that the consultation responses had been very supportive of the policy, and in particular the proposed Strategic Priorities. The Panel were fully supportive of the proposed Strategy and requested to be updated on the progress of the Strategy at future meetings.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 10.1 In leading the Homelessness Task and Finish group over the last year I have understood first-hand the huge impact homelessness has on the people of the New Forest and on the Council in responding to the issue. I have called for measures to be put in place to address this impact and I welcome the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy; with a set of key priorities that aim to end rough sleeping, increase access to suitable accommodation and which review frontline services to the betterment of those who approach for assistance.
- 10.2 I recognise the consultation responses reflect the views of a number of organisations and individuals. We have considered them all in our review and understood the wide range of views which both support the new Strategy or provide us with valuable insight on how we may go about delivering our key priorities. As a result we are happy to make some minor additions to the strategic priorities to clarify our commitments. Overall I am pleased to see our changes are widely supported.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Consider the summary of consultation responses, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report; and
- (b) Recommend to the Council that the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as attached as Appendix 2 to this report, be approved for adoption.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

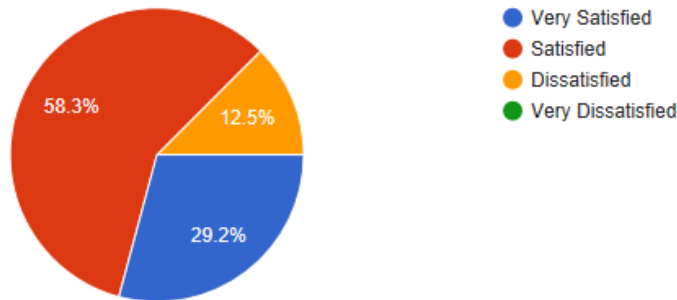
Public documents

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy – Summary of Consultation Responses

Format of Strategy

How satisfied are you with the format of the draft strategy?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of the format were:

“It is a clear and easy to digest strategy document”.

“Well formatted and easy to read”.

“Clear and concise with specific actions.”

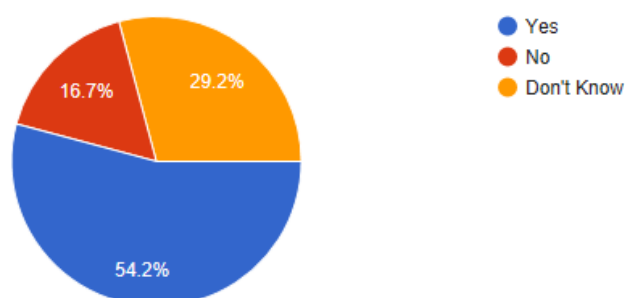
Whilst there were no negative comments received about the format the following comment was received:

“The question is not clear. We ...found the draft strategy document easy to access online but wonder if has been made available to those who will be or have been affected by homelessness. What methods is the Council using to ensure those who will benefit or be disadvantaged by the strategy are able to respond?”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: In formulating the strategy the Council has listened and responded to hundreds of views and experiences, both positive and negative, of homeless applicants over the last 12 months. These include statutory reviews and corporate complaints. The Key Priorities are a reflection of the areas where the Council wishes to improve in order to provide a fully comprehensive service to homeless people. The Council understands there is much work to do and annual reviews of the strategy will monitor progress and ensure further consultation takes place. On this occasion the Council has consulted with all service providers delivering services to vulnerable people and given them every opportunity to respond on their service users’ behalf and promote the consultation.

The strategy contains a summary overview section on the local homelessness situation in the New Forest District. Do you think this section accurately summarises the local situation?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this section were:

“This section does accurately reflect the local situation and having the statistics listed really helps to give a picture of why there are significant housing issues with 60% of households earning less than the UK average and the accommodation not being as affordable. The district is unique in it being spread over a wider area and it was good to have the homeless applications identified by area in the pie chart.”

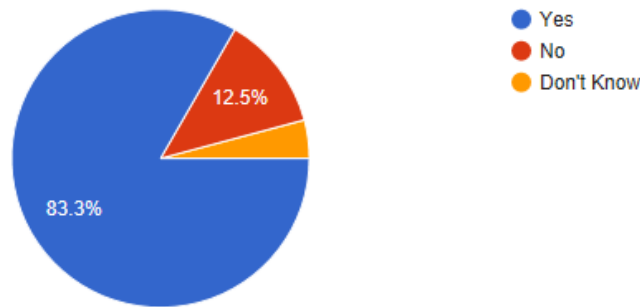
Other views highlighted the needs of the hidden homeless who don't present themselves to the Council:

“...this section records well the situation of people that 'come through the system ' and will consent to their details being recorded and referred through the portal to the NFDC team. There are people outside the system who are very unwilling, for a range of reasons to engage with statutory services. We need to acknowledge that these people exist and any strategy has to include provision / services for people unwilling to engage initially with statutory services (there needs to be alternative routes to help)”.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is receiving an increased number of approaches for homelessness assistance, particularly from single people who make up 37% of all approaches. The Council believes this is a reflection of more and more hidden homeless households approaching for assistance. Whilst we recognise there are still hidden homeless households not accessing our assistance we are committed, through the Strategy, to raising the profile of our service with partner agencies and the wider public to break down any barriers that exist. We are also committed to working with voluntary agencies to create pathways of assistance to those who would not normally approach the Council. Strategic Priority 2 has been amended to include a provision for exploring pathways of support for the 'hidden homeless'.

Do you agree that the Council should prioritise improving its front line services in order to prevent homelessness?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

"We agree that the Council should prioritise improving front line services to prevent homelessness."

"New changes in NFDC staff having tablets etc. to be able to go out to clients is a positive and productive move."

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

"...There still needs to be adequate funding for services, such as Nightstop, that support people when they actually experience homelessness".

"...We would like to know how the Council intends to discharge its duty of prevention to people who are being assessed or who are identified as vulnerable, with regard to the provision of emergency accommodation

"...In terms of homelessness services and increase access to them how is this going to put into effect and what services is this referring to?"

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable, and furnished, emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. The Council already has plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district and for it to be made available to crisis presentations. The accommodation will have both self-contained and shared facilities and applicants will be provided with bedding, which they keep, and a home starter pack. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

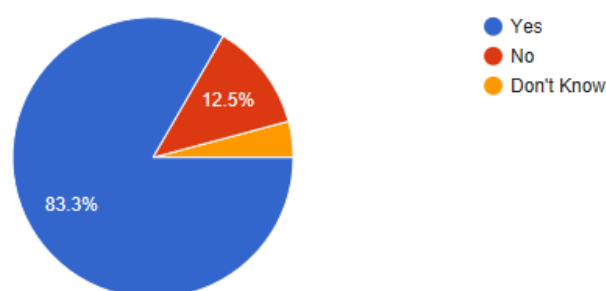
Our proposed action in Strategic Priority 1 commits to ensuring our service is fully accessible giving applicants the flexibility of options to contact the team by phone, in person and online,

but also to provide them useful information which may mean they can resolve the situation themselves. Our service is contactable 24 hours a day with our emergency out of hours service available at weekends and during the night. We will offer appointments in our local offices and seek to explore co-location opportunities with other services around the district. The Council now has a Homeless and Housing Advice Officer present at Inclusion drop in sessions once a fortnight to allow service users an opportunity to access both services at the same time. We will seek to replicate such sessions with other services where appropriate.

Strategic Priority 2: Work with partners and stakeholders to identify issues early on and prevent homelessness by working together

Do you agree with the approach to work with partners and stakeholders to prevent homelessness in the District?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

“As a member of the district homelessness Multi Agency Forum we believe it is essential for partners and stakeholders to work together to prevent homelessness and to support homeless people”.

“The relationship building mentioned to bring in more private landlords is vital to ensure housing availability in the New Forest and is a priority.”

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

“...to do this effectively it is important that all partners are aware of current legislation and eligibility”.

“...The council is limited to the amount of support it can provide with everything else that is a priority so it is vital other services work alongside the council to put in place the preventative measures.”

“With Two Saints scaling back their support services there will be a shortfall in homelessness support for anyone who isn't Single and Complex, is it NFDC or HCC who will pay for this? And what will they be offering for anyone that doesn't fit new criteria?”

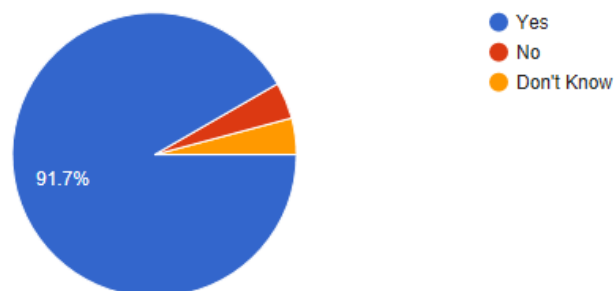
COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is committed to providing briefings and training to external agencies. Strategic Priority 2 has been amended to reflect this. The Service Manager for Housing Options has already attended several external agency team meetings and provided legislative training. This will be further provided where identified and required. The Multi- Agency Forum will also be used as a platform for updates and training.

In Strategic Priority 1 of the Strategy the Council has committed to review the resources required to further support applicants in order to both prevent and relieve homelessness. The impending reduction of the Hampshire County Council Social Inclusion contract will be a factor in this review. Many of the actions within the Strategy support a multi-agency approach and also recognise that volunteer organisations have expressed their desire to be part of a localised support offering. The Council will therefore explore these opportunities in the coming months.

Strategic Priority 3: Ending the use of B&B accommodation through investing in and facilitating the development and use of good quality affordable housing and temporary accommodation

Do you agree with the Council's approach to ending the use of B&B accommodation through the provision of its own temporary accommodation and increasing access to affordable homes?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

“... agrees with an approach to keep emergency provision within the communities of the New Forest so help and support for individuals can be connected into existing support networks.”

“It is vital B&B use is minimised if not completely stopped as it is not financially sustainable for the Council. B&B's are often not suitable for clients and given the limitation on their budget it is difficult to be able to afford to eat without cooking facilities.”

“We agree that B&B accommodation is unsuitable for many of our vulnerable clients and would welcome this approach ending as it does not provide any wrap around support.”

“The strategy features sensible and well thought ideas but there has to be a guarantee of resource to support all scenarios and emergency situations.”

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

“Is there a guarantee that by not considering B&B accommodation at all we are at risk of not resolving an issue and supporting a rough sleeper in a suitable time frame? Any homes that are affordable must be spread around the District and support given by the council working with fellow stakeholders to support these Individuals in to long term housing. Finance is crucial so more detail and figures would be helpful.”

“We would like the council to provide details of what alternative accommodation and support will be available and whether this will be for primarily for families or will it include emergency accommodation for individuals. What other facilities will be available for those whose situation will become more complex if they are placed in Night shelters, where repeat attendance is common or B&B, which is usually long term.”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: Through implementing the Strategy the Council is placing a focus on early intervention to prevent homelessness in the first place. This would result in less households requiring emergency accommodation.

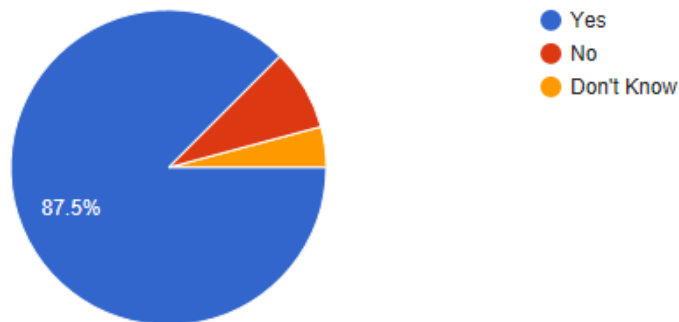
However, where homelessness does occur the Council is committed to having a range of suitable emergency accommodations options available. The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. We already have advanced plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district. The accommodation will cater for both single people and families and will have both self-contained and shared facilities. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

In Strategic Priority 4 the Council recognises that the response for rough sleepers and those with complex needs will require effective and practical support and this will go hand in hand with sustaining this new provision of accommodation and moving applicants on to more permanent accommodation. The Council is to review the resources required to achieve this in due course.

The newly adopted Housing Strategy has made a commitment to building more Council housing, at least 600 for the period up to 2026. Through 2018/19 the Council has also increased its portfolio of private sector lease properties (PSLs) and has struck up partnerships with private landlords to secure more properties in 2019/20. The latter will provide further move on options to support pathways out of emergency accommodation.

Do you agree with the Council's approach to placing a greater focus on ending rough sleeping?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

"It mentions the option of looking into using a housing first model which is known and proven to be successful and prevents repeat homeless. This will be very suitable to The New Forest because there is a lot of hidden homelessness where rough sleepers are spread out over a wider area."

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

"As stated in the strategy the number of rough sleepers in the district is relatively low. However, there is also a number of "hidden homeless" - sofa surfing, sleeping in outbuildings, cars, public toilets, tents - who do not appear to be recognised under this approach. They are often young, at risk and need follow up advice and care. We would like the Council to clarify how it plans to meet the needs of these vulnerable individuals who are often the most difficult to accommodate."

"Unfortunately, not everybody wants to give up rough sleeping. What does the council do then?"

"The council is not a one stop fix all place - it still needs to work closely with local charities who have the experience and local knowledge of hidden and homeless people (some are not all rough sleepers)."

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: Through the actions in the Strategy the Council aims to foster effective partnership relationships with organisations, including charities that work with the 'hidden homeless', where housing support can still be provided through a partnership approach. Continuing to raise awareness of the homelessness service and Streetlink reporting has seen the Council receive increased reports of those rough sleeping and high numbers of applications from single people. The Duty to Refer placed upon Public Bodies to

report homelessness has also seen the Council receive additional reports that ordinarily would have gone unreported.

The Council recognises that some rough sleepers make a choice to continue to sleep rough despite efforts to offer accommodation. The combined actions within Strategic Priority 4 propose to demonstrate a long term pathway of accommodation and support for rough sleepers to see a sustainable way off the streets should they choose to do so. The review of support required will include such scenarios to ensure welfare of those continuing to sleep rough is taken in to account.

Final Comments

“This has to be properly funded and support gained from expert organisations who understand the complexities of why individuals are homeless.”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

Through delivery of the strategy the Council aims to enhance its relationships with agencies providing specialist assistance to tackle complex issues in a joined up approach. Recent examples of joint work have led to a number of successful outcomes for complex individuals. The Council seeks to repeat these successes through enhanced relationships with the Multi-Agency Forum and external agencies.

“Tenant Representatives would like NFDC to consider the feasibility of using the following as temporary accommodation for rough sleepers; Shipping containers & Homes made out of recycled plastic (bricks / panels)”.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

The Council is open to exploring innovative accommodation solutions through the provision of both temporary accommodation and the building of new general needs accommodation. Through delivery of the Housing Strategy the Council is exploring such options which would be subject to a feasibility study and planning consent.

Due to the current pressures on emergency accommodation the advanced plans to provide such accommodation include acquiring existing buildings, largely which have been used for similar provision in the past and thus support a quick turnaround.

“What is planned about the lack of a homeless hostel in the New Forest area?”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. We already have advanced plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district. The accommodation will cater for both single people and families and will have both self-contained and shared facilities. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

The Council has no plans to provide a night shelter hostel as the numbers rough sleeping at any one time do not warrant the resources and expenditure required. The Council would prefer to work with rough sleepers to access suitable accommodation and support.

“We fully support the homeless strategy and see the council’s commitment to supporting those in need. There is mention of providing better emergency accommodation not using B&B’s however there is not detailed information about what that looks like.”

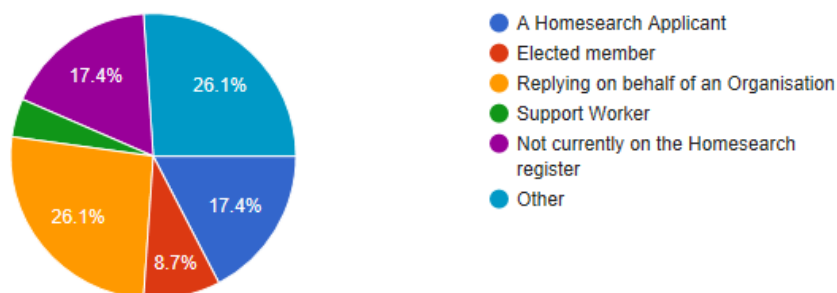
COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

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Information About You

Are you?

23 responses



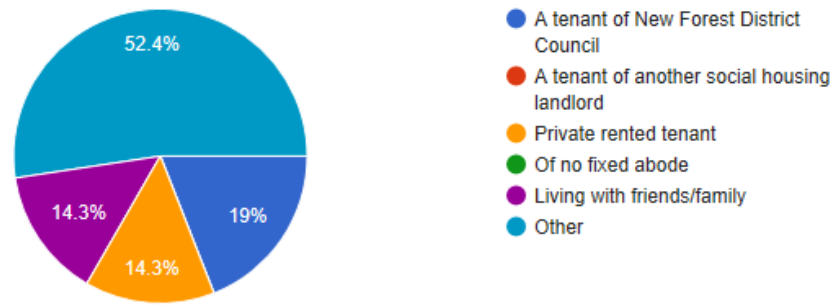
If from an Organisation or other, please state below which one

9 responses

- NHS
- The You Trust
- The Handy Trust Charity (Youth Service)
- Acts 4 Sharing
- Tenant Involvement Group
- Citizens Advice New Forest
- Two Saints Limited
- Community First New Forest

Are you?

21 responses



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2019 - 2023



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Foreword

I am proud to introduce this strategy which sets out our vision for the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping in the New Forest.

Whilst this strategy demonstrates our key priorities in responding to and preventing homelessness, it is very much linked to our overall strategic vision for housing and the wider housing market in the New Forest, combining with the launch of our new Housing Strategy and our new Allocation Policy.

We recognise that for many people in the New Forest access to secure, good quality affordable housing at a time of economic uncertainty and welfare reforms is extremely challenging. We also recognise the serious impact homelessness has on people's lives and how vulnerable people are adversely affected and are at greater risk of homelessness.

Prevention of homelessness is very much at the forefront of national initiatives and policies to improve peoples' lives. This council is equally committed to early intervention and has fully embraced the principles of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in its service delivery, with access to advice and assistance for all who approach, no matter whether they are vulnerable or not.

We welcome other national initiatives, such as the drive to end rough sleeping and will play our part in tackling this issue locally.

We recognise that early intervention at a local level is extremely important as there is far greater impact on the health and well-being of households once they become homeless.

Responding to individual cases of homelessness crisis is also far more costly for the wider public sector than prevention and we must demonstrate value for money in our approach.

In response to these challenges this new homelessness strategy reflects our strong commitment to tackling homelessness and develops the vision for our frontline services. In the

last year we have made great strides forward with a task and finish member led group scrutinising our response to homelessness.

The strategy looks very much to the future and sets out the actions we intend to take to help us reach our goals and how the council, and its partners, will work together to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years.

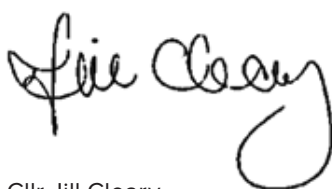
In setting our priorities we will embed specific initiatives aimed to stop people sleeping rough and provide a pathway for those that already find themselves in this situation.

Working in partnership is key to the success of the strategy. This year we have established a multi-agency forum of statutory agencies and local organisations to assist us in our efforts to tackle homelessness. We will continue to engage with, maintain and develop relationships with these organisations and agencies to develop a more cohesive set of priorities.

The strategy aims to develop these priorities in recognition of national, regional and local policy and proposes a vision for the benefit of all our residents, stakeholders and partners.

Our response to homelessness will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure our initiatives are having the desired outcomes, so that we can stay ahead of emerging trends and so that we can seize opportunities to benefit the people of the New Forest.

I look forward to continuing to work with all people involved in preventing and tackling homelessness in the New Forest.



Cllr Jill Cleary
Portfolio Holder for
Housing Services

Strategic Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Priorities 2019-2023

- Continue to invest in and improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of front line services to prevent homelessness.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to identify issues early on and prevent homelessness by working together.
- Invest in and facilitate the development of good quality affordable housing and temporary accommodation.
- Bring Rough Sleeping to an end.



National context

Nationally, incidents of homelessness have been increasing for a number of years and the increased use of, often unsuitable, temporary accommodation has been a direct consequence.

Homelessness acceptance rates and use of temporary accommodation have gone up nationally in recent years. At nearly 57,000, annual homelessness acceptances were nearly 17,000 higher across England in 2016/17 than in 2009/10. Main housing duty acceptances stood at 42% above their 2009/10 low point.

At the end of March 2018 the most common reasons for loss of last settled homes nationally were:

- Parents, other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (28%).
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured shorthold tenancy (25%).
- Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner (12%).
- Other reason (e.g. homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, returned from abroad) (7%).
- Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner (6%).
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to reasons other than termination of assured shorthold tenancy (6%).

On 31 March 2018, the total number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation was 79,880, up 66% on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010.

In addition, homelessness services across the country had an inconsistent approach. Some local authorities assisted only those people it owed a statutory duty and those without a 'priority need', particularly single homeless, were not receiving effective and consistent assistance across the country to relieve their homelessness.

With rising homelessness and temporary accommodation costs MPs within Government sought to redress the situation and proposed improvements to the legal framework to prevent and tackle single homelessness more effectively.

A new Homelessness Reduction Framework was proposed and began as a Private Member's Bill introduced to parliament in June 2016 by Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East. It was published following a homelessness inquiry conducted by a cross-party Select Committee.

In its Homelessness Monitor 2018 report Crisis identified that:

- Since 2010/11, homeless placements in temporary accommodation have risen at twice the rate of homelessness acceptances.
- The national total rose by 8% in the year to 31st March 2017, up 61% on the low point six years earlier.
- A continuation of this trend would see placements topping 100,000 by 2020.
- Bed and breakfast placements now stand 250% higher than in 2009.
- The National Audit Office has drawn attention to a 39% real terms increase in local authority spending on temporary accommodation in the five years to 2015/16.

Summary of Homelessness Statistics	2009/10	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% change 2009/10-2017/18
Rough sleeping in England – snapshot	1,768	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	169
Local authority statutory homelessness cases	89,120	112,350	114,780	115,580	109,380	23
Local authority statutory homelessness acceptances	40,020	54,430	57,740	59,120	56,630	42

.....

The framework was given Royal Assent as The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and commenced on 3rd April 2018. The Act amends the legislative framework laid out in the Housing Act 1996 and places new duties on Councils to:

- intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas as the period a household is threatened with homelessness is extended from 28 days to 56.
- provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'.
- identify reasonable steps to help secure accommodation to either prevent or relieve the homelessness of applicants who approach for assistance.

The Act also places a duty of specified public bodies to refer those clients they are working with and are homeless or threatened with homelessness, to a local authority homelessness service. This duty commenced on 1st October 2018.

Recent Central Government policy and initiatives have been focussed on reducing the impact on vulnerable households and to ensure local housing authorities are providing effective prevention activities and consistent frontline services, for all those who approach.

It is part of a continuing national agenda to tackle the root causes of homelessness and drive through change in the housing sector.

Future regulation, policy change and subsequent impacts in the wider housing sector are likely to be driven by:

- Housing White Paper (2017).
- Social Housing Green Paper (2018).
- Licensing of Homes in Multiple Occupation (2018).

- Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018).
- Tenant Fees Act 2019.
- Private Landlords (Registration) Bill 2017-19.
- Lifting of council borrowing caps to encourage council house building.

The Government also continues to evaluate and review access to the private rented sector with the Tenant Fees and Landlord Registration Bills proceeding through Parliamentary process in an effort to redress access to the sector for low income households.

The Government aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. It launched its new Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 and requests that all homelessness strategies are reviewed and rebadged by the end of 2019 to include a specific focus on addressing rough sleeping.

The annual count of those sleeping rough in the autumn of 2018 showed a 165% increase on the figures for the same count in 2010, with a further 2,909 people sleeping rough.

The Government recognises that there is not one single solution to end rough sleeping and a strategic approach to tackling the causes of homelessness and the health and well-being of rough sleepers is as important as the supply of affordable homes and supported housing.

With the lifting of Council borrowing caps to facilitate increased building of social housing, grant funding for tackling Rough Sleeping and new legislation across the social sector Councils must respond to the challenge and co-ordinate effective response to tackling the housing issues in their area.

The profiles of people who currently sleep rough

People who sleep rough in England tend to be:

- Male.
- between 25 and 55 years old.
- Predominantly white.

In the 2018 counts and estimates:

- 84% of people found sleeping rough were men.
- 14% were women (gender for the remaining 2% was unknown).

It is estimated to cost the public purse £21,200 per person per year if rough sleeping occurred alongside substance misuse and offending.

Contributory factors leading to homelessness nationally:

- High demand for housing leading to high house prices & private rents with greater shortfalls between rents and LHA Levels.
- Shortage of social housing for rent.
- Increasing household bills.
- Welfare benefits cuts and reform.
- Cuts in funding for statutory and voluntary services offering support to vulnerable people.

Corporate context

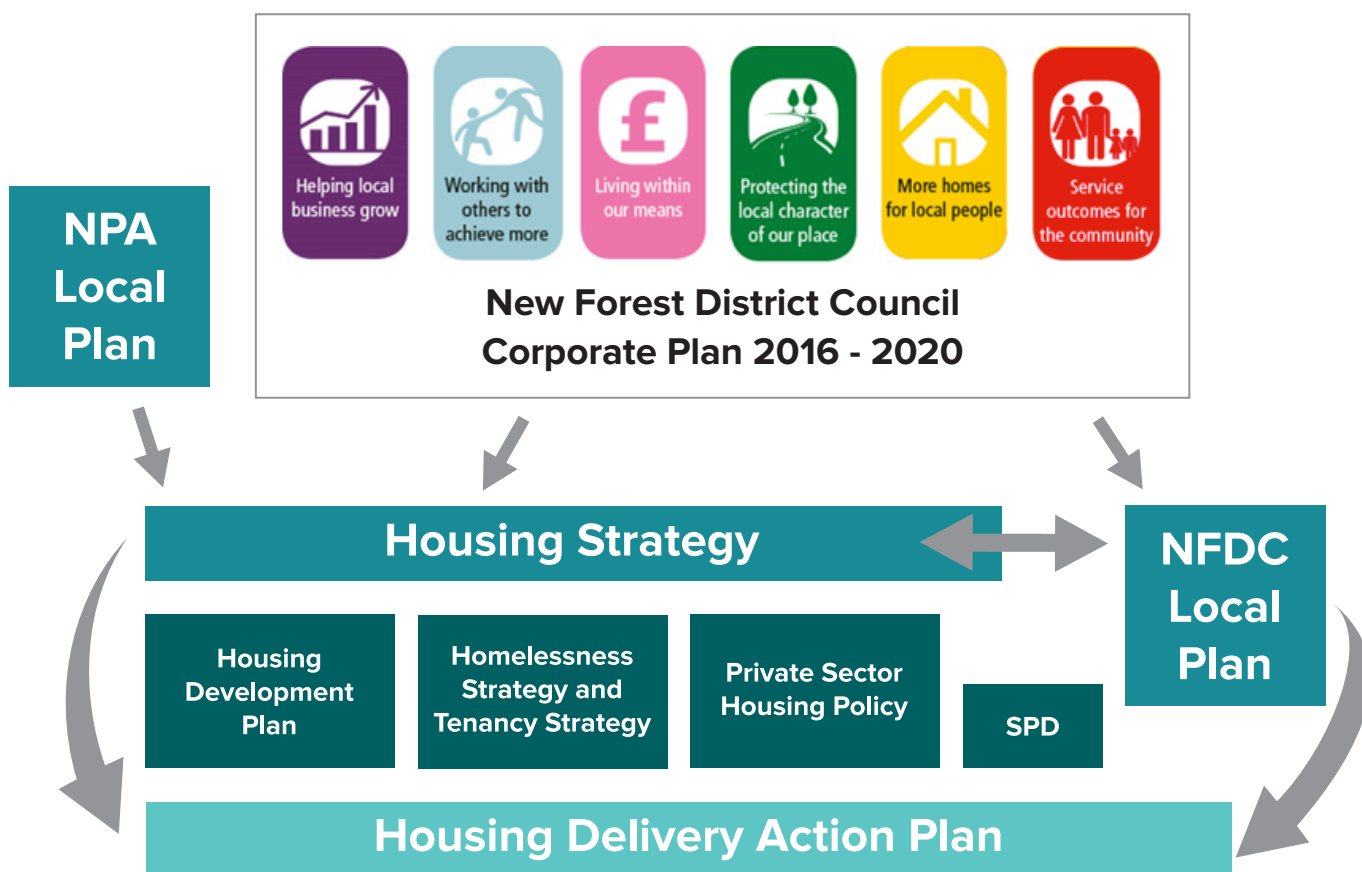
The priorities of the New Forest District Council Corporate Plan not only recognise the importance of delivering more homes for local people (both market and affordable) but the need for our actions and influence to contribute to economic growth, to protect the character of our place, and to optimise our effectiveness by working closely with others.

Sitting alongside the recently published draft local plan - and its 20 year target of 10,500 new dwellings across the New Forest district - the new Housing Strategy contains high level objectives supported by a suite of new operational policies and related strategies, including this

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which is also driving through a review of the Allocations Policy for social housing lettings.

The relationships within and between the various policies and documents will ensure that a composite approach is taken to housing interests in the district, be they related to new-build, the existing stock or duties and services to those who are vulnerable or facing homelessness.

Alongside this strategy the Council's new Housing Strategy, Tenancy Strategy and Allocation Policy brings about a joined up strategic approach to provide maximum benefit and support overall aims and objectives.



*SPD = Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Local context

The district is one of the most populated non-unitary authorities in England with 179,236 residents.

Located between the largely urban areas of Southampton and Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole the district has unique characteristics with a large National Park area covering the majority of the district.

There are significant housing issues in the district. In contrast with those parts of the district that can be characterised as affluent with house prices and rentals above the UK average, areas of deprivation and a number of significant housing challenges exist, which include:

- Acute income/housing affordability disparity.
- High proportion of high value detached homes with a dearth of smaller homes.
- High numbers of second homes in some parts of the District.
- 60% of households earn less than the UK average.
- 9,000 households supported with Housing Benefit and/or Council tax reductions.
- 28% of the population over 65 years' old.

Low average incomes and high average house prices, results in significant cross commuting between those who work in the forest but can't afford to live here and those who can afford to live within the district but work elsewhere.

Under the pre Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) legislation the number of homeless applications increased from the lows of 2011, with the numbers of households accepted as being owed a full duty to secure accommodation by the Council at their highest in 2017/18.

As the Council largely concentrated efforts on those households who met statutory duties the figures are considered an under representation of the homelessness issues within

Homeless applications and decisions by year		
	Total applications taken	Homeless acceptances
2017/18	165	115
2016/17	194	108
2015/16	196	115
2014/15	185	95
2013/14	160	83
2012/13	124	55
2011/12	112	42

the district, when compared with the scope of the new duties under the new Act from 2018.

In 2017/18 115 households were accepted as homeless and owed the main housing duty. This figure has increased year on year and we project the figures for those owed the new legislative duties and subsequently the main housing duty, to be much higher for 2018/19, as the number of approaches to the service continues to rise.

The urban areas of the New Forest district are naturally shown as having the highest levels of homeless applications with the eastern strip of the district representing the source of 49% of all homelessness applications from 2012 to 2018.

All approaches to the service from April 2018 are now recorded. The first 11 months shows consistently high demand, with 1,855 new cases opened and 752 new duties for the council to take reasonable steps to help secure accommodation. 121 cases which have come to the end of their new duties (47% of all duty ended cases), within the first six months, have been successfully discharged by securing accommodation.

The Council has accepted 94 main housing duties in the first 11 months of the HRA. Without further policy intervention these are expected to increase exponentially as more of the new duties come to an end.

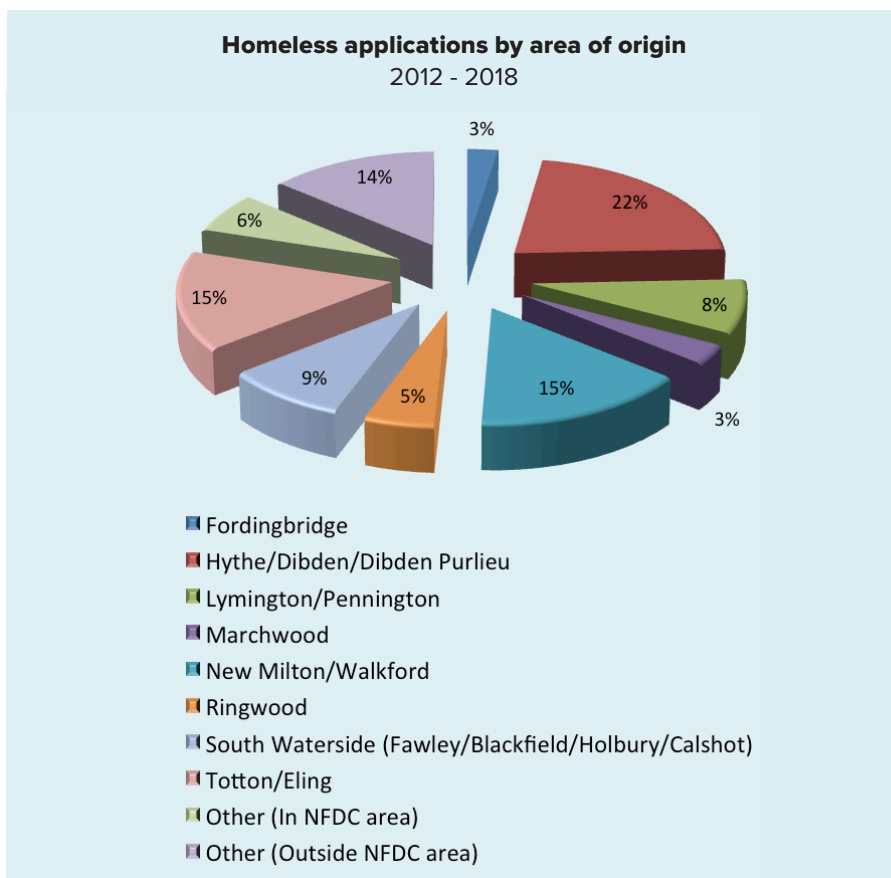
Approaches from April 2018 show the following key features:

- 58% of approaches have dependent children or are pregnant.
- 24% of approaches are single males.
- 13% of approaches are single females.
- 94% of approaches are of white British background with no discernible ethnic group in the remaining 6%.
- 14% of relief duties are granted to cases fleeing domestic abuse.

Although not a determining factor in the award of duty the 'Priority Need' of Relief Duty Cases is recorded to determine temporary accommodation duties and shows:

- 51% of duty cases had a priority need due to dependent children.
- 16% of duty cases had a priority need due to mental health issues.
- 10% of duty cases had a priority need due to physical disabilities.
- 5% of duty cases had a priority need due to experiencing domestic abuse.
- 5% of duty cases had a priority need due to experiencing learning difficulties.

Mental health issues are not just experienced by the 16% above. In fact, 355 applicants and/or household members stated they needed support with their mental health. Many of these applicants have acute needs where holistic partnership working with specialist agencies is required to resolve their housing issues and ability to sustain accommodation in the future. Others will require low level support but it is clear the Council must ensure these services are on offer and there is a route to obtaining such services.



Approaches for assistance under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 post 3 April 2018			
Month	New cases opened	Prevention duty accepted	Relief duty accepted
April	176	44	20
May	165	61	14
June	185	60	29
July	164	41	24
August	153	29	20
September	155	35	28
October	166	45	34
November	166	42	16
December	143	32	20
January	230	66	37
February	151	41	14
Total	1854	496	256

The main reasons for homelessness follow national trends. The main cause as shown to the right continues to be family and friends no longer willing to accommodate other households within their properties. This is indicative of these households struggling to obtain or sustain their own affordable housing in either the private rented or owner occupied sectors. Moving in with family is often as a result of having to give up or having lost settled accommodation in the past.

The end of private rented tenancies remains the second most common reason and the council aims to target these areas within its priorities.

The Council aims to increase the provision of affordable housing in the district whilst working with landlords and tenants in precarious housing situations to help sustain accommodation.

Numbers of rough sleepers remains low but is no less important in our efforts to reduce homelessness. These figures represent a core group of rough sleepers with multiple complex needs such as drug and alcohol addictions, mental and physical health issues.

The Council is committed to finding solutions to rough sleeping issues within the district and will include these in its priorities. It is also important that these solutions create long term sustainability to prevent clients returning to the streets.

Main reason for loss of last settled home	2012 - 2018 total of duty acceptances	April 2018 - 28 Feb. 2019 total of new duty acceptances
Parents, other relatives or friends no longer able/willing to accommodate	189	232
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	185	209
Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner	72	73
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	62	78

Rough sleeper counts							
Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Number	4	3	9	2	4	7	8

There is high demand for social housing in the area whilst social housing lettings continue to fall year on year, with the number of Council stock lettings being:

- 242 in 2017/18.
- 295 in 2016/17.
- 345 in 2015/16, representing a 30% reduction in 2017/18.

The Right to Buy scheme continues to offset new build additions to the stock. 34 Council properties were sold under the scheme in 2017/18.

Excluding the Council stock, Sovereign are the main social housing provider in the district with nearly 1800 properties. Several other registered provider landlords including Radian, Stonewater, Aster and Vivid provide smaller numbers of units throughout the district.

The New Forest became a full service area for Universal Credit from 26th September 2018. There are 1,462 working age housing benefit claimants in the Council stock and 1,440 in the housing association and private rented stock.

Migration of nearly 2,900 housing benefit claimants to Universal Credit is estimated to begin in 2020. New tenants or those facing a change of circumstances will now be required to claim Universal Credit. The Council will monitor this situation and put in place measures to manage the transition and any concern in the housing market.

Two Saints are commissioned by Hampshire County Council to provide Community Support to vulnerable people, including families and single people in the district. They provide tenancy sustainment, help claiming welfare benefits and help to access services and appointments in relation to health needs.

In the first 6 months of 2018/19 Two Saints supported 191 clients through its drop in sessions alone. The scale of the contract is due to be reduced post August 2019 to single complex people only. It is likely to have a detrimental effect upon support provision to vulnerable households. The Council will include measures to address this shortfall in its priorities.

5,056

Number of council properties

3,354

Number of households on the New Forest Homesearch Housing Register

Emergency Accommodation (EA) Placements post 3 April 2018			
Month	EA placements	Left EA	Households in EA at month end
March			59
April	19	16	62
May	6	23	45
June	15	20	40
July	18	17	41
August	16	21	36
September	17	20	33
October	18	10	41
November	5	18	28
December	15	12	31
January	25	13	43
February	8	20	31
Total	162	190	/

Social Housing Lettings 2017/18		
	General needs	Age restricted
Council Stock	201	41
Registered Provider Stock	101	42
Total	302	83
Overall total	385	

Local services

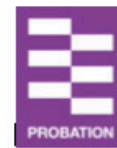
The Council has access to the following principal functions and activities within the New Forest to assist in the prevention of homelessness:

- Community Support for single complex homeless clients provided by Two Saints (From August 2019).
- Community based Inclusion Services to address drug & alcohol addiction needs.
- Three Supported Accommodation projects for residents suffering with mental health conditions.
- NHS Mental Health Services in Totton and New Milton.
- Wellbeing Centres in Hythe and New Milton.
- Supported Housing & Community Support provided by Together who help people deal with the personal and practical impacts of mental health issues.
- Young Person Supported Accommodation with support provided by You First and Two Saints.
- Support for youth homelessness through It's Your Choice and The Handy Trust who offer information and advice about many issues that affect young people including drug and alcohol abuse, sexual health, homelessness, employment & education and mental health issues.
- Supporting Families Programme through the internal Community Safety Team.
- Domestic Abuse support, target hardening and response through MARAC and You First.
- Tenancy Management and Rent Officers for Council owned stock.
- Housing Benefit visiting officers
- Job Centre Plus in Hythe, Lymington and Ringwood.

- Hampshire County Council Adult and Children Services.

The Voluntary Sector provides additional resources and support and includes:

- Benefits advice and advocacy.
- Foodbanks across the district.
- Faith and other voluntary groups providing befriending, practical and mentor support.
- Services for young people.



Hampshire County Council



Actions to date & future direction of travel

In late 2017 the Council recognised that its approach to homelessness and housing would require new impetus and vision to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act and housing demand in the district. Full corporate backing was provided to implement a number of changes to lay the foundations for effective future service delivery which will continue beyond the publication of this strategy.

Since the start of 2018 the Council has:

- Allocated a new Executive Head to drive through change across the Housing Service.
- Appointed three new Housing Service Managers including a new Housing Options Service Manager.
- Set up a Task & Finish Member group, led by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services to establish the priorities for change.
- Reported position statements and priorities for change to the Member led Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
- Utilised grant funding to create three additional Homelessness & Housing Advisor roles and a Service Support role.
- Procured additional temporary accommodation.
- Increased its portfolio of Private Sector Lease (PSL) properties by 14 properties.
- Carried out viability assessments to convert existing communal facilities to emergency accommodation.
- Procured, installed and tailored a Homelessness IT Management System to embed its approach to delivering the Homelessness Reduction Act and produced effective statistics to support initiatives and meet new statutory reporting requirements.

- Participated as a leading development group member in the development of Locata's Homelessness Reduction Act IT system.
- Set up and held three meetings of the Multi-Agency Forum involving statutory and voluntary groups in the district.
- Reduced the numbers of households living in emergency accommodation.
- Continued to accommodate rough sleepers past the provision of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in order to co-ordinate work with agencies to end their rough sleeping.
- Acquired 11 properties as part of its 'Buy-Back Scheme'.
- In 2018/19 the Council has budgeted to spend £19m on increasing the council housing stock through development and acquisitions.
- In 2017/18 the Council provided financial assistance to 245 households to secure private rented accommodation.



New build Council properties in Lyminster, 2018

Strategic priority 1

Invest in and improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of front line services to prevent homelessness

We will:

- Ensure the principles of the Homeless Reduction Act are fully embedded and all applicants receive a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) and reasonable steps are identified to help resolve their housing situation.
- Develop housing pathways and discharge protocols with partner agencies, create and provide accessible self-help guides and information for the following vulnerable groups in line with the homelessness code of guidance:
 - people released from prison or youth detention accommodation;
 - care leavers;
 - former members of the regular armed forces;
 - victims of domestic abuse;
 - people leaving hospital;
 - people suffering from a mental illness or impairment; and,
 - other groups we deem at particular risk of homelessness in the district.
- Review and adopt a new Social Housing Allocation Policy to better respond to housing need and homelessness.
- Increase access to homelessness services and housing assessments in satellite and remote locations with the availability of face to face appointments, homelessness referral portal and the expansion of IT facilities, website content and self-help guides.
- Ensure clients have access to Council facilities and dedicated support in order to claim Universal Credit and other benefits online.
- Provide annual training to Homeless and Housing Advice Officers on legislation and welfare benefits plus periodic training to enhance mediation and negotiation skills to help tackle family and landlord evictions.
- Review and optimise internal processes to progress households through our frontline homeless services to move on and independent living.
- Review the current allocation of staffing resources against the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, emerging demand trends, client support requirements, rough sleeper engagement, move on of temporary accommodation and landlord liaison.
- Produce support and resource directories of agencies providing services within the district.
- Monitor the impact of Welfare reforms and the go live of Universal Credit full service post September 2018. Work alongside the Council's Housing Benefit department to action further initiatives.
- Establish a working protocol with the New Forest Supporting Families programme to provide support to vulnerable families in place of the reduced Community Support contract.



Strategic priority 2

Work with partners and stakeholders to identify issues early on and prevent homelessness by working together

We will:

- Continue to develop the Multi-Agency Forum and its outcomes.
- Establish a Landlord Forum to improve relationships with landlords and letting agents to:
 - Improve access to the Private Rented Sector;
 - Maintain Landlord confidence in the sector;
 - Promote early intervention to resolve tenancy issues;
 - Consult on the review of rent in advance and rent guarantee schemes;
 - Promote the Council's Private Sector Lease Scheme;
 - Help create a Private Rented Sector Offer to discharge homeless duties.
- Work with Registered Providers to prevent evictions through joint working arrangements and establish an eviction protocol.
- Promote the duty to refer and develop specific protocols and referral pathways with external agencies, such as DWP.
- Attend and actively participate in strategic and operational groups across Hampshire to protect and enhance services in the New Forest.
- Attend team meetings of partner agencies to promote the service and early intervention and to provide training on homelessness legislation.
- Establish an updated protocol with Hampshire Social Services for homeless 16-17 year olds and an effective approach to clients with an assessed care need.
- Establish positive working relationships with The Council's Private Sector Enforcement Team, Disabled Facilities Grants Team and link to the Private Sector Housing Strategy in order to prevent homelessness.
- Establish local support networks with Support providers, Advocates, Voluntary Agencies, Community and faith groups to include:
 - Appropriate support to sustain tenancies;
 - Furniture and home start packs;
 - Access to Foodbanks if required;
 - Befriending and support;
 - Help with budgeting, money management, benefits advice and claiming benefits;
 - Support to the 'hidden homeless' who will not engage with statutory services, to obtain housing assistance.
- Establish links with the Credit Union to offer financial products where required.
- Work alongside domestic abuse services, refuges and the Police to assist victims of domestic abuse remain safe.
- Review and propose support arrangements for households with complex needs who need support with daily living.



Strategic priority 3

Ending the use of B&B accommodation through investing in and facilitating the development and use of good quality affordable housing and temporary accommodation

We will:

- Develop in-house emergency accommodation through remodelling of existing stock and property acquisitions as an alternative to Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- Develop support and processes to successfully move on households to long term accommodation to free up existing temporary accommodation.
- Develop an incentive scheme/ package to encourage households under-occupying in Council housing stock to move to smaller properties.
- Continue with the 'buy back' of ex-council housing stock.
- Adopt an innovative approach to new affordable housing provision, including implementing shared ownership, in addition to social rent to increase the range of products the Council has to offer its residents.
- Identify and optimise council house building capacity through partnerships with Registered Providers and private developers.
- Identify opportunities for the development of Council owned land and garage sites for affordable housing purposes.
- Develop a landlord incentive scheme to attract landlords to work with the Council in providing access to their properties.
- Continue to support the provision of refuge accommodation in the district for victims of domestic abuse.



Strategic priority 4

Bring rough sleeping to an end

We will:

- Respond to reports of rough sleeping within 24 hours and ensure this response adequately engages with rough sleepers.
- Establish a rapid rehousing pathway response to incidents of rough sleeping which incorporates a multi-agency and voluntary sector response.
- Explore the viability of launching a Housing First model of support to the most complex and vulnerable to sustain tenancies.
- Ensure a targeted support approach can be called upon for rough sleepers who have been provided with accommodation to prevent them returning to the streets. This will require 'Navigators' to co-ordinate support services, and provide support, encouragement and advocacy.
- Develop closer links with voluntary and community agencies, such as foodbanks and faith based organisations to promote effective local responses and consistency in tackling homelessness across the New Forest.
- Commit to accommodating people rough sleeping beyond incidents of the severe weather emergency protocol (SWEPE) to ensure a multi-agency approach can be called upon to end their street homelessness.
- Ensure those considered not in 'priority need' receive the same level of advice and assistance as those who trigger the statutory definition.



Monitoring and review

Performance and progress against each of the actions within this strategy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with members and stakeholders.

A transparent annual position statement will be produced to highlight our progress and how effective these measures have been in reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

As we implement the Homelessness Reduction Act new trends and learning will emerge. We are keen to understand the ongoing impact on our residents and our annual review will incorporate a full statistical analysis of approaches to the service. This will enable us to be responsive in tackling any emerging issues.

New actions and targets may be agreed if further changes are made to national legislation and policy. It is expected the Government will regularly review the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act and will seek to work more closely with Councils to implement its Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, working with the Executive Head of Governance & Regulation and Service Manager – Housing Options will lead the review of the delivery plan.

In reviewing its strategy annually this council remains committed to embracing amended policy direction and incorporating it within annual updates.

New Forest District Council

Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst. Hampshire. SO43 7PN

Email homeless@nfdc.gov.uk • **Web** newforest.gov.uk/housing • **Phone** 023 8028 5234

Self-Referral website including Duty to Refer information

<https://hpa2.org/refer/NEWF> • newforest.gov.uk/housing

 [newforestdc](https://twitter.com/newforestdc)  [newforestgov](https://www.facebook.com/newforestgov)



PROPOSED HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the Council's approval in December 2018 of the proposed new draft Housing Allocation Policy ("the Policy") a statutory consultation exercise commenced. The Policy set out proposed changes to the way the Council allocates social housing within the District. The proposed Allocation Policy can be viewed using the link below:

<http://www.newforest.gov.uk/allocationconsultation>

- 1.2 This report sets out the outcome of the consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under s.166A (13) of the Housing Act 1996 before adopting, or making any alterations to a housing allocation scheme that reflects a major change in policy, the Council is required to:

- (a) send a copy of the draft policy, or proposed alterations, to every private registered provider of social housing and registered social landlord with which they have nomination rights; and
- (b) afford them with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.

- 2.2 Under s.168 of the Act, the Council is required to take reasonable steps to bring the effects of the alteration to the attention of those who are likely to be affected by them. It is accepted good practice to give those who will be so affected an opportunity to comment on the proposed alterations before they are adopted.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 Process

- 3.1.1 On 15 January 2019 the Council opened its consultation on the Policy. A consultation document containing a summary of the proposed changes, a link to the Policy and a questionnaire was made available on the Housing Section of the Council's website. A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix 1. The consultation ended at 5pm on 20 February 2019.

- 3.1.2 The following groups were also specifically invited to consult on the Policy:

- (a) All private registered providers of social housing with which the Council has nomination rights;
- (b) All current Homesearch applicants; and
- (c) Statutory, non-statutory agencies and organisations delivering services to vulnerable people in the District.

3.1.3 The Service Manager for Housing Options also visited the Job Centre Plus in Ringwood, a Care Leavers' Team Meeting and a Community Mental Health Team Meeting to promote the consultation. A presentation on the Policy was also given to the Tenant Involvement Group and Homelessness Multi-Agency Forum.

3.2 Outcome

3.2.1 There were 250 responses to the Council's consultation; 88.8% of responses were from current Homeseach applicants. Responses were also received from the following organisations:

- (a) Radian (private registered provider of social housing);
- (b) Ringwood Town Council;
- (c) New Milton Town Council
- (d) Together
- (e) Tenant's Involvement Group;
- (f) The Handy Trust Charity (Youth Service);
- (g) The You Trust; and
- (h) Two Saints

3.2.2 A summary of the responses received, including some of the comments made on the Policy and the Council's responses to them is attached at Appendix 2. The full responses to the consultation can be viewed at www.newforest.gov.uk/allocationconsultation

3.2.3 The consultation outcome showed the majority to be in support of the Policy; with 63.1% of respondents confirming that they believed it was correct for the Council to allocate scarce social housing with reference to an applicant's housing need and not only the time spent waiting for an allocation of housing.

4. FOLLOWING ADOPTION

4.1 After adopting a new housing allocation policy the Council will complete the procurement of a new IT system and begin a period of implementation to ensure the efficient re-registration of all applicants. During this period the Council has to notify all current housing register applicants of the change and the likely effect of it on their application. Applicants will be invited to re-apply to join the new housing register later in the year. Once an application is received it will be re-assessed in accordance with the provisions of the new allocation scheme. The re-assessment period will likely take 3-4 months.

4.2 During the period of implementation, the allocation of social housing to existing housing register applicants will continue based upon the current allocation policy, until the new register goes live. Shortly before the re-registration period commences, new applications will no longer be accepted on to the existing register. From this point new applications will be directed to apply to the new housing register. These applicants will not be able to bid for properties until the new register goes live. Any such applicant who is assessed as having an urgent need to move will be assisted separately.

4.3 As each applicant is re-registered they will be notified of their new band under the Policy. All applicants will have a statutory right to seek a review of the decision made on their application. A date for the commencement of the new register is likely to be in the autumn and every effort will be made to introduce this at the earliest opportunity.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The majority of respondents to the consultation have expressed support for the proposed changes to the way social housing is allocated in the District as contained in the Policy. Some comments were made about the impact of the Policy on those who are adequately housed in the private sector. The Policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Council's recently adopted Housing Strategy. In particular, the Council will be developing its own shared ownership scheme which will provide opportunities for residents who are renting in the private sector to get onto the property ladder.
- 5.2 Having considered the consultation responses it is not proposed that any changes should be made to the draft document that formed the basis for consultation. The Proposed Housing Allocation Policy is therefore attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In order to better manage the allocation of social housing, the Council has procured a new case management system to replace the paper based system. This will result in more efficient working. The costs are likely to be in the region of £35,000 for year 1 and £8,000 ongoing annually thereafter and will be met from existing budgets.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none.

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken at the drafting stage of the Policy. An updated Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3.

10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none.

11. HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL'S COMMENTS

- 11.1 The Panel noted that a thorough consultation had been carried out, with 250 consultation responses being received, the majority of which had been from current Homesearch applicants. The level of support of those who responded on the consultation was pleasing. The Panel welcomed the proposed new Housing Allocation Policy. It was felt that the proposed new housing bands would enable Council housing to be allocated to those most in housing need. The Panel also noted that there was discretion within the policy to consider individual circumstances when determining the need for housing, which was reassuring.

12. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

12.1 I am very happy with the outcome of the consultation, which has confirmed that the proposed policy is sound. I have evaluated the report and recommend it to the Cabinet.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Consider the summary of consultation responses to the statutory consultation; and
- (b) Recommend to the Council that the revised Housing Allocation Policy, as attached as Appendix 4 to this Report, be approved for adoption.
- (c) Authorise the Executive Head of Housing and Governance to sign off the re-registration period as complete and to activate the new allocation policy and housing register at the earliest opportunity.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers

Published documents

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ALLOCATION POLICY - CONSULTATION

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES:

New Forest District Council (“the Council”) is proposing to change its approach to housing allocation.

WHY IS THE COUNCIL CHANGING ITS ALLOCATION POLICY?

The Council recognised that it needed to undertake a review of its housing allocation policy as a review had not been undertaken since 2012.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Secretary of State’s guidance, the Council needs to review its allocation policy to take into account the new duties to homeless households brought in by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.¹

The changes to the Council’s allocation’s policy have been developed with regard to these new duties but have also been influenced by:

- (a) the prevailing housing needs and conditions within its district,
- (b) the results of the work of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group and the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel; and
- (c) the desire to ensure that applicant’s on the Council’s housing register are given appropriate priority to enable the Council to make the most effective use of its housing stock.

For a full copy of the Council’s proposed new allocation policy please visit <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/allocationconsultation>

CONSULTATION

A consultation over the proposed changes to the way social housing is allocated starts on 16 January 2019 and will close on 13 February 2019.

The Council is inviting comments on several changes being proposed on who can join the housing register and the way in which housing need is assessed.

¹ Paragraph 2.45 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018

Currently the Council's allocation policy has 4 bands. All applicants, apart from exceptional cases, are placed in Band 3: Priority. The only determining factor thereafter is the length of time the applicant has been on the housing register.

Bands	Number of Households ²
Band 1: High Priority (Urgent)	24
Band 2: High Priority	51
Band 3: Priority	3,120
Band 4: No Priority	207

10 out of 11 applicants on the Council's housing register are in Band 3: Priority. On average there are 300 properties per year that become available for allocation; applicants can wait up to 10 years for an allocation of housing. The current policy does not adequately allow for the allocation of housing on the basis of need.

WHAT WILL BE THE MAIN CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S ALLOCATION POLICY

A summary of the main proposed changes that will be introduced with the new allocations policy can be found below:

PROPOSED CHANGE: QUALIFICATION

Applicants will still need to be aged 16 or over and have a local connection as defined under the current allocation policy, but will also need to:

- (a) be in housing need; in that the applicant's housing circumstances fall within one of the proposed new policy's bands;
- (b) have been assessed as lacking the financial means to enable them to resolve their housing need; and

Applicants who do not satisfy the above criteria will not qualify to join the housing register. Furthermore, any applicant who falls within any of the categories below will be classed as non-qualifying to join the housing register:

- (a) are an owner-occupier (with the exception of those with a housing and assessed care need, who cannot resolve their own housing situation and have a need for extra-care or sheltered accommodation);
- (b) have deliberately worsened their circumstances to enable them to qualify onto the housing register; or
- (c) are deemed to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour that is serious enough to make them unsuitable as tenants.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

² Figures correct as at 13 September 2018

The Council believes it is important that there are clear qualifying criteria for joining the housing register that relate to an applicant’s housing need and also their conduct. This will ensure that scarce social housing within the Council’s district is allocated to those who have a genuine need for it and that those who do not have a need for subsidised social housing do not have access to it.

1. Do you agree that the qualification criteria as described above should be introduced?

Yes

No

Don’t Know

Comments:

PROPOSED CHANGE: BEDROOM NEED ASSESSMENT

The Council is proposing to change the way it assesses the number of bedrooms that an applicant is entitled to under the allocation policy. The new bedroom need assessment has been set in line with the current regulations affecting bedroom entitlement for the purposes of calculating Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit.

PROPERTY TYPE/SIZE	HOUSEHOLD
Bedsit	Single Applicant
1 Bedroom	Single Applicant or Applicants living as a couple with no children
2 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 1 child; or Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 2 children of: (a) The same sex under 16 (b) Opposite sex under 10
3 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple with 2 children, with at least 1 of opposite sex over 10; Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 3 children or 4 children: (a) Of the same sex under 16; or (b) Two children of each sex under 16 (c) of either sex all under 10
4 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants with 5 or more children Single Applicant or Applicants with 4 children where at least one of them is aged 10 and is of the opposite sex of the others or one of them is aged 16 or over.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

To ensure that the bedroom needs assessment is set in line with current regulations affecting bedroom entitlement; this will avoid issues of affordability and also with our partner landlords who set bedroom entitlement according to the regulations.

2. Do you agree that it is correct to set bedroom need assessment in this way?

Yes No Don't Know

Comments:

PROPOSED CHANGE: HOUSEHOLD

The Council proposes to change those who will be included as a member of an applicant's household on their housing application. Only the following groups of people will be treated as a member of an applicant's household:

- The applicant's spouse or cohabitant;
- The applicant's children/dependants aged 35 and under with whom the applicant resides or with whom the applicant might reasonably be expected to reside.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

The Council needs to ensure that applicants are only allowed to include in their housing application those members of their household that would reasonably be expected to reside with them. This is to ensure the effective use of family sized accommodation in the district area.

3. Is it correct for the Council to set household membership in this way so that there is effective use of family sized accommodation the Council's district?

Yes No Don't Know

Comments:

PROPOSED CHANGES: HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT

The Council proposes to introduce a new banding system for prioritising applications for an allocation of housing. The proposed new bands can be found below:

BAND	CRITERIA
Band 1 – Emergency Need for Housing	Applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Who require a management move: where the applicant has been assessed as having an exceptional need to move by a Senior Officer (b) Who have been assessed as having an urgent health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (c) Whose accommodation has been assessed as being in a state of emergency disrepair and the hazards cannot be rectified within a reasonable timescale; or (d) Who need to move to escape violence or threats of violence, harassment or a traumatic event in the home.
Band 2. Serious Need for Housing	Applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Who have been accepted as being owed the full housing duty under the Act and where discharge of duty cannot be achieved by a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation; (b) Who are existing social housing tenants under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms; (c) Who are severely overcrowded (e.g they lack 2 or more bedrooms, or have 2 children who lack a bedroom, such as a single parent with 2 children, where at least one of the children is over the age of 1 in a 1 bed home); (d) Who have been assessed as having a high health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstance; (e) Who live in a home assessed as being in a state of high disrepair and the disrepair cannot be rectified within reasonable timescales; or (f) Who have been assessed as ready to move on from supported housing in the Council’s district area.
BAND	CRITERIA

<p>Band 3 – Need for Housing</p>	<p>Applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Are overcrowded and lack 1 bedroom; (b) Have been assessed as having medium health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (c) Are certain serving, or former serving members of the regular forces, or their spouse or civil partner; (d) Are homeless, to whom the Council owes a Relief or Prevention Duty under Part VII of the Act; (e) Who need to move under the Right to Move provisions; (f) Are existing social landlord tenants under-occupying their accommodation by 1 bedroom; (g) Have been assessed as not having a permanent home, or are at risk of becoming homeless and are not owed a duty under (d) above; (h) Have been accepted as being owed the full housing duty under Part VII of the Act and where it is possible to discharge duty with a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation; or (i) Are key workers where the Council identifies that there is a critical need for the key worker to be rehoused to ensure the availability of an essential public service for the New Forest community.
<p>Band 4 – Lower Need for Housing</p>	<p>Applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Have been assessed as having a lower health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (b) Share essential facilities such as a toilet, bath, shower or kitchen with other households or lack essential facilities; (c) Are households sharing with relatives or friends; (d) Are occupants living in supported accommodation who have not been assessed as ready for move on from supported housing in the Council’s area. (j) Are assured shorthold tenants who do not have the financial means to purchase a property (see Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification); or (k) Have been assessed under Part VII of the Act as not in priority need or are intentionally homeless and are still statutory homeless at the point of offer.

With the exception of those who satisfy the rural connection provisions for a rural parish, anyone wishing to join the Council’s housing register will need to have an assessed housing need that falls into one of the 4 bands above.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

Under the Council’s current allocation policy, the main determining factor for an allocation of housing is time spent on the housing register. The Council believes it is important for social housing to be allocated to those who have an assessed housing need.

4. Is it correct for the Council to allocate scarce social housing, where demand far outweighs the supply, with reference to an applicant's housing need in accordance with the new priority bands?

Yes

No

Don't
Know

Comments:

PROPOSED CHANGES: SUSPENSION AND REMOVAL

Suspension:

An applicant will be suspended from the housing register in any of the following circumstances:

Where:

- An applicant has failed to bid on any properties within a 12 month period;
- An applicant has refused 2 offers of accommodation that have been deemed suitable following review, or where no review was lodged, in a 12 month period. This includes all offers made whether by successful bid, direct offer or automatic bid;
- An applicant who is owed a homeless duty and who refuses a suitable offer of accommodation made in discharge of duty owed;
- The Council becomes aware of a change of circumstance which requires re-assessment of housing need;
- An applicant has failed to complete and return a Renewal Request within 3 months of it being sent out;
- The Council receives information that the Applicant is no longer eligible or qualifying to be on the Register;
- The Council receives information that the Applicant has provided false information.

Removal:

An application will be removed from the housing register for the following reasons:

Where:

- The applicant requests that their application be removed;

- The applicant has died;
- The applicant has been rehoused; including where the applicant has accepted an offer of accommodation and lodged an unsuccessful review of its suitability;
- The applicant fails to return a renewal request within 3 months and there are no exceptional circumstances for delay;
- An allegation that an applicant is no longer eligible, qualifying or has provided false information is made out (this includes when this has occurred following the verification stage);
- Following two suspensions within a 12 month period.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

For the better management of the housing register, the Council is proposing to remove or suspend applications if certain circumstances apply.

5. Is it correct for the Council to manage applications on the housing register by suspending or removing applications due to conduct; for example, as outlined above, if an applicant fails to make bids or refuses suitable offers of accommodation?

Yes

No

Don't
Know

Comments:

ANY FURTHER COMMENTS

6. The Council would like to invite you to make any further comments that you would like to be considered regarding the draft policy below.

PLEASE NOTE THE COUNCIL WILL NOT BE MAKING ANY CHANGES TO ITS RURAL PARISH CRITERIA

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

7. Are you?

A Homesearch Applicant

Elected member

Replying on behalf of an Organisation If so which one?

Support Worker

Not currently on the Homesearch register

Other Please state

8. Are you?

A tenant of NFDC

A tenant of another social housing landlord If so which one?

Private Rented Tenant

Of no fixed abode

Living with friends/family

Other Please state

HOW TO RETURN THIS FORM

You may email a copy of the form to housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk

You may send a printed copy to:

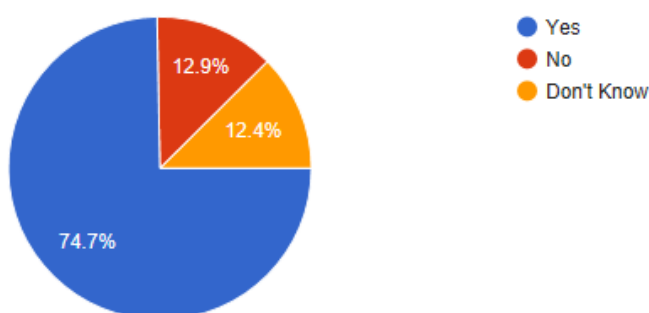
Allocation Policy Consultation
Housing Options
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY - SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Proposed Change: Qualification

Do you agree that the qualification criteria as described above should be introduced?

249 responses



COMMENTS: These were some of the comments made by those who agree with the Council's proposals: *"this is a good idea because it will definitely approve (sic) the amount who NEED to be housed..."* and *"I hope this will mean a fairer qualification system"*.

Those who did not agree felt that it would have an unfair impact on applicants who were adequately housed in the private sector but who have been on the waiting list for a number of years: *"I have been on the housing list for 8 years. It would make my life so much easier to have a Council house..."* and *"the time spent waiting for an allocation should not be ignored. It is not fair that people who cannot afford to buy are delayed their right to social housing."* Others felt that those who were in privately rented accommodation who could not afford the rents would be adversely affected: *"I completely disagree, just because we rent privately doesn't mean we can afford it..."*.

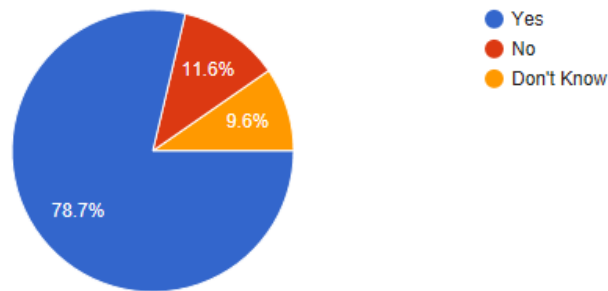
COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: Social housing is not an entitlement or a right but is a scarce resource that the Council has a statutory duty to allocate with reference to housing need. The Council also recognises that it needs to be proactive in creating affordable housing for those in its District. This is the reason why under its newly adopted Housing Strategy it has made a commitment to building more Council housing, at least 600 for the period up to 2026. These will be of differing tenures, including affordable rents and shared ownership schemes. Where appropriate, this will give those who are currently housed in privately rented accommodation an opportunity to get onto the property ladder. It should also be noted that

the Council would not expect those who cannot afford their private rents to remain living in them as any such applicant would come under the statutory definition of homeless.

Proposed Change: Bedroom Need Assessment

Do you agree that it is correct to set bedroom need assessment in this way?

249 responses

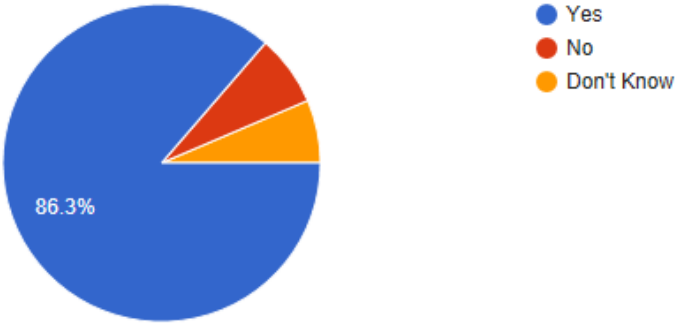


COMMENTS: Some respondents felt that consideration needed to be given to step families or grandparents with grandchildren who came to visit. Some of the comments made were as follows: *“There are circumstances like step children that stay but aren’t classed as living with you, which I think is wrong that they cannot have their own space in the family home when they stay every weekend...”* and *“As a single person I would like the option to have my grandchildren to stay over sometimes, just having one bedroom would not allow me to do this”*. Some respondents felt that it was important for the Council to include extra rooms for carers and those who needed an extra bedroom due to illness/disability.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council has to consider how to effectively use its family sized accommodation. There is a great demand for family sized properties and it would not be appropriate to allocate such properties to those applicants who only have an occasional, rather than a full time, need for the extra bedrooms. The proposed new allocation policy makes provision for those who live in carers or who need extra bedrooms due to illness or disability at paragraphs 5.2.3 and 5.3.5.

Is it correct for the Council to set household membership in this way so that there is effective use of family sized accommodation in the Council's District?

249 responses

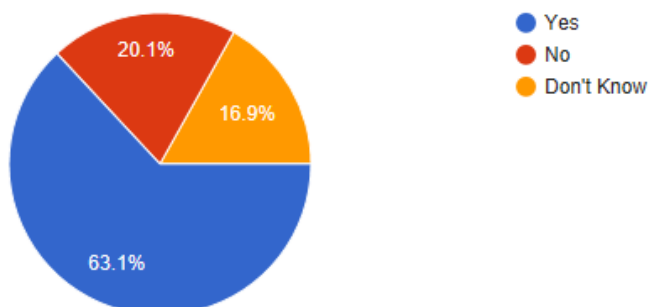


COMMENTS: Respondents felt that it was necessary to take individual circumstances into consideration. Some of the comments made included: *“family circumstances are especially diverse in the 21st century and the lack of affordable housing in the area means that it is not unusual to find adult children living with their parents past the age of 35...”* and *“As I just stated an elderly person might need family help in later life as opposed to going into a home...”*

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council recognises that there will be circumstances where it will be appropriate to allow children aged over 35 to be included in an applicant’s housing application and where it will be necessary to include other members of the applicant’s extended family in their application, for example elderly relatives. The new draft allocation policy makes specific provision for this at paragraphs 5.3.5 and 7.6.1. The Council took into consideration the age at which an individual would qualify for housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit for a self-contained property in their own right, when setting the age of 35 for adult dependants.

Is it correct for the Council to allocate scarce social housing, where demand far outweighs the supply, with reference to an applicant's housing need in accordance with the new proposed priority bands?

249 responses

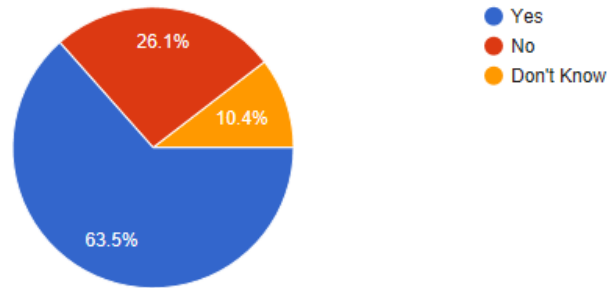


COMMENTS: Those who agreed with the Council’s proposals made the following comments: *“Like I said before it isn’t fair because there is people who newly join the register needs its (sic) a lot more”, “Housing need should be on assessed need, not just on time spent on list (sic)...”* and *“Accommodation should be weighted on need and not time on the list..”* and *“If a person/family have been on the register for X amount of years and a less healthy/more needy person comes forward, the most poorly is more worthy, I would say. I have no problem stepping aside for someone more poorly than me”*. Those who disagreed with the Council’s proposal felt the new system would be unfair to those who had been on the list for numerous years but who were adequately housed in the private sector. Some of the comments received included: *“I feel that I have been penalised for continuing to pay private rent through hard work...”, “Not if that means people who have been on the list for a long time gets (sic) moved to the back as that’s unfair”* and *“Everyone deserves there (sic) chance to get a council property. I think the current way is the fairest...”*

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council has a statutory duty to allocate social housing with reference to housing need. There is no automatic right or entitlement to social housing. However, the Council recognises that residents need more affordable housing options. In the Council’s newly adopted Housing Strategy, the Council has committed to the development of at least 600 new council properties of differing tenures. Where appropriate, this will give families who are currently living in privately rented accommodation an opportunity to get onto the property ladder by way of shared ownership. Some respondents were also concerned that the time they had spent on the waiting list would be lost; however, under the proposed new allocation policy, all current Homesearch applicants will retain their original application date unless their housing need has changed (paragraph 5.4.1 (b)(ii)).

Is it correct for the Council to manage applications on the housing register by suspending or removing applications due to conduct; for example, if an applicant fails to make bids or refuses suitable offers of accommodation?

249 responses



COMMENTS: Some respondents felt that applicants should not be removed for failing to make bids in a 12 month period. In particular, the following was said: *“Months if not a year or more can pass without a suitable property (eg a property with bedroom Nos suitable to the applicant’s family size in the area or within appropriate travelling distance to place of employment...”*, *“I agree with conduct, but not for not making an application within 12 months, as this can be due to lack of suitable accommodation rather than willingness to apply...”*

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: Under the proposed new allocation policy, the Council would not remove an applicant for failing to bid within a 12 month period. An applicant may have their application suspended for a period of 6 months if they fail to bid within a 12 month period. However, if an applicant’s application is suspended, they will have a right to request a review of the decision. If they have a justifiable reason for failing to make bids they can request a review of the suspension. The lack of suitable properties in this period would be considered as part of this review. Any decision made by the Council on an applicant’s housing application can be reviewed on the applicant’s request. The reviews process can be found at paragraph 7.5 of the draft allocation policy.

COMMENTS FROM GROUPS:

RADIAN (a private registered provider of social housing within the Council’s) agreed with all the proposed changes, but felt that it was necessary to provide limits when undertaking the financial assessment as other Councils had done.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council felt it was not appropriate to set financial limits but that it was important to have the flexibility to treat each individual case on its own merits.

The Council has specifically excluded from qualification those who have the financial resources to afford to purchase a property.

THE TENANT INVOLVMENT GROUP: felt that allocations need to be judged on a case by case basis, that there should be justification for the “35 years old” limit for dependants, that there needs to be an appeal process and that banding for exceptional need should be a decision for more than 1 Officer. They also felt that families should be assessed for extra bedrooms if their children are nearing the age criteria to avoid having to move to another property shortly afterwards. They considered that it was necessary to consider community cohesion and children being settled into local schools when assessing the need for bedrooms.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council has a discretion that will allow it to treat each individual case on its own merits; including if appropriate, for a family to be assessed as needing an extra bedroom because their children are nearing the age criteria for an extra bedroom (paragraph 7.6); the Council has set the dependant age limit to 35, with reference to when an individual qualifies for housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit for a self-contained property in their own right. There is a right of review of any decision that the Council makes on an application (paragraph 7.5).

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL: Councillors felt that the Household criteria needed to reflect that some families may have adult children with disabilities, that the Rural Connection should also apply to towns and felt that people may be removed for refusing “suitable accommodation” which was at a distance from an area in which they had a connection and in which they needed to remain.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council has the discretion to include other family members in an applicant’s household if appropriate; this would allow a child over 35 with a disability to be included in an applicant’s household (paragraph 7.6 and 5.3.5). The Council considers that the specific characteristics of rural parishes provides for a justification to have local connection criteria; however, it would not be manageable to apply such criteria to all towns within the District area. All applicants have the right to request a review of a decision made on their application. Accordingly, any applicant who had refused accommodation because it was not suitable would be able to provide their reasons for refusal (including distance from an area in which they needed to remain) and would have the ability to have those reasons considered.

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL: It was suggested that it would be appropriate to move those who were under-occupying social housing by 1 or more rooms into Band 2. It was also felt that those who were homeless (whether or not owed duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) should be in Band 1 or 2; particularly as the Armed Forces Covenant may apply to them. It was also suggested that it was necessary to take into consideration medical reasons for anti-social behaviour when deciding whether or not an applicant should qualify to join the housing register.

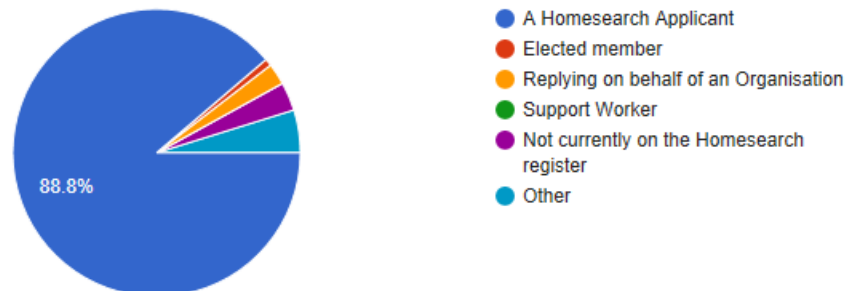
COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: The Council needs to set priorities for those who have a housing need. Those in Band 2 have been assessed by the Council as having a serious housing need; in particular those who are under-occupying by 2 bedrooms will have a greater need to be rehoused than those who are only under-occupying by 1 bedroom. The Council has placed only those to whom it has a statutory duty to secure alternative housing within Band

2. Those who are in the armed forces have a special category within Band 3; any such applicant who satisfies the criteria of Band 1 or 2 will be placed into those bands. At paragraph E(3)(ii) of Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification, the Council states that applicants will qualify to join the housing register if they demonstrate a commitment to improving their behaviour. Provision has also been made to ensure that individual circumstances (which would include medical causes for behaviour) are taken into consideration when determining whether someone qualifies to join the housing register due to unacceptable behaviour (paragraph E(4) of Appendix 2).

Information About You

Are you?

249 responses



If from an Organisation or other, please state below which one

13 responses

Together

The You Trust

The Handy Trust Charity (Youth Service)

Acts 4 Sharing

Radian

I am my son's appointee. My son is on the register.

Agreed comments from Tenant Representatives who attended the TIG meeting on 8.2.19

NFDC Employee

I am a volunteer for St Thomas's Good Samaritans group in Lymington but completed the form as an individual, not a representative of the group.

New Milton Town Council

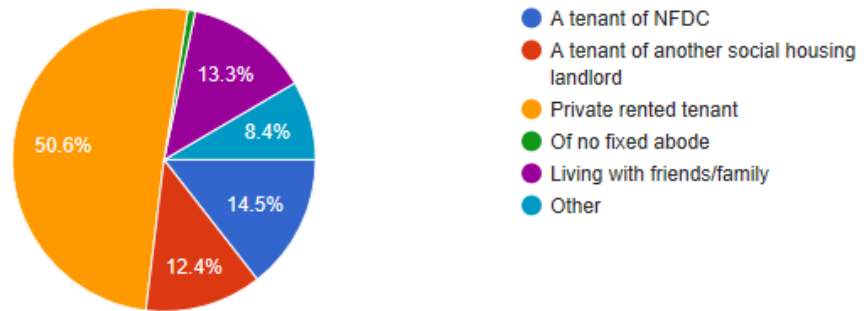
Two Saints Limited

14426

mother of an applicant

Are you?

249 responses



Equality Analysis

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	Housing Allocation Policy
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Brief Description of policy/decision/business plan

Under s166A of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) New Forest District Council is required to produce a housing allocation scheme which sets out details on how housing applications will be assessed, processed and how decisions will be made.

The demand for social housing within the Council's district far outweighs the supply. The government expects that social housing should go to people who genuinely need it; including those that the government has identified with high levels of assessed housing need who are referred to as the "reasonable preference group"¹, but also expects that the Council be given the freedom to meet local priorities.

The aims and objectives of the Council's housing allocation policy is:

To ensure the allocation of social housing in a fair and transparent manner, with the aim of using the Council's scarce housing resources appropriately, and in particular, to enable the Council to meet:

- a. Its prevention and homelessness statutory duties;
- b. the housing needs of those that are most vulnerable;
- c. the need to allocate housing with reference to the prevailing housing conditions and needs within its district; and
- d. its statutory obligations as set out in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996;

¹ Includes statutory homeless applicants, owed duties under homelessness legislation, are occupying insanitary or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including disability) and those who need to move to a particular locality within the district where failure to do so would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

Relevant Data, Research

The Council has used the data available from its current housing register as set out in the table below to assess the impact of the proposed changes to the Council's Allocation's Policy on those with a protected characteristic.

As at the 8th March 2019, there were 3239 households registered on the Council's housing register. Of those the following information is known:

Age Groups	Numbers
40+	70
45+	266
55+	153
60+	175
65+	398

Ethnic Groups	Numbers
African	14
Asian	12
British White Anglo	3027
Caribbean	2
European	57
Irish	2
Middle Eastern	2
Mixed	4
Oriental	7
Non White (Other)	135

Household Make Up	Numbers
Single Parent Families	685

The Council is committed to ensuring that it monitors its compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010; in particular, it notes that there is a need to ensure that data is collected to enable the Council to identify how the provisions within its allocation policy is impacting on certain protected characteristic groups, particularly by gender, those with disabilities and specific BME categories not restricted to colour. Periodic reviews with updated data will be required after the proposed new Allocation Policy is adopted.

Equality Analysis

In assessing the potential equality implications, the Council will consider the impacts (both positive and negative) on the groups with protected characteristics and any mitigating actions to be taken, or where appropriate, the reason why a provision is the most proportionate means of achieving the Council's objectives.

Age:

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (ie 35 year olds) or range of ages (ie 18-30 year olds)

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

Whilst the main proposed changes to the Council's Allocations Policy are likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic group, the introduction of an online application process may have an impact on older applicants.

Further, whilst not a change, the Council recognises that the Incentive to Work provisions are likely to have an impact on both older and younger applicants.

- Online Application Process: In 2018, whilst almost all adults aged 16 - 34 and were recent internet users (99%)², it is recognised that those aged 75+ are not regular internet users (only 44%)³; however, in 2018 statistics from the Office of National Statistics show that there has been an increase in internet use by those who are aged 65-74 to 80% in 2018⁴. This shows a steady increase of internet use for those aged 65+. Applicants aged 65+ represent 12% of applicants on the Council's housing register.
- Incentive to Work: It is accepted that some older applicants will be unable to satisfy the Incentive to Work provisions; However, many older people are now working beyond retirement age and further the Incentive to Work provision recognises community contribution, for example voluntary work in which older people will be able to equally participate. There is currently a decline in youth unemployment rates down to 464,000 for those aged 16 -24 in June – August 2018⁵; however, it is recognised that this group may also be negatively impacted by the Incentive to Work provisions.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

- Online Application Process – the Council's objective in this provision is to provide for the efficient processing of applications for housing within its district area. There is an indication that elderly applicants who are aged 75+ will likely have the least access to internet facilities; however, the Council notes that this age group will likely be seeking extra care housing and will have support in place to ensure that online applications can be made. Furthermore, the Council has installed computers in both its main and satellite offices to provide for greater access to internet facilities. There are also free internet facilities in libraries and most elderly applicants will likely to have family or other support in place to assist them in making applications. The Council Housing Options teams contact details are accessible to members of the public and on the Allocation Policy and can be contacted for support or referral to a support agency, such as Age UK who provide significant support to elderly applicants. Finally, the Council recognises the need to monitor applications being made, and if necessary, will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if there is evidence of a decline in representation of applications from those in these age groups as compared to the current representation.

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2018>

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05871>

(Protected Characteristic: Age) Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification (continued)

- Incentive to Work: The government has made clear that it wishes local authorities to provide incentives for applicants to work or make a positive contribution to the local community.⁶ The Council has introduced this provision to achieve this objective and whilst it recognises that there might be a negative impact on certain age groups (the young and the elderly) it considers that this initiative is the least intrusive and strikes the most proportionate balance between the objective identified and the need to avoid adverse impacts on those with this particular protected characteristic. The Council will continue to collect data to monitor how this provision is impacting on those in this protected characteristic group and make appropriate changes if necessary.

Disability:

A person has a disability if s/he has physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The Council already takes steps to ensure that when an applicant registers to join its scheme they are given an opportunity to specify any disability needs and requirements for particular housing. Through the Council's choice based bidding process, vacancies are described in sufficient detail to enable those with a disability to make informed decisions so that they bid for those properties that are best suited for their needs. Where appropriate the Council also makes direct offers to ensure that adapted properties are allocated to those with disability needs.

The Council recognises that it will need to ensure that data is collected to enable it to provide better monitoring of how its policies are impacting on those who have the protected characteristic of disability.

The Council acknowledges that some of its measures will have a negative impact on those who have a disability as follows:

- Online Application Process: Whilst there is likely to be a neutral impact on those with a physical health disability (as they will still be able to access internet facilities at home and in public spaces (library and at the Council offices) it is likely that there will be a negative impact on those with mental health disabilities.
- Incentive to Work: There are an estimated 3.8 million people of working age (16-64) with disabilities in employment. In April – June 2018, an employment rate of 50.7%. The employment rate of people without disabilities is 81.1%. During that period, people with a disability had an unemployment rate of 8.8% as compared with 3.4% of people without disabilities⁷. In light of this

⁶ Paragraph 4.27 of the Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England.

⁷ <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7540>

(Protected Characteristic: Disability) Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan (continued)

information, it is likely that the Incentive to Work provisions will have an adverse impact on those with a disability. However, the Incentive to Work provisions do recognise community contribution, for example by voluntary work which would enable those with disabilities to take advantage of this provision. It is recognised that those with mental health issues are often encouraged to take up voluntary work⁸.

Suitable Accommodation: Those with disabilities will more likely require specific accommodation that adequately takes into consideration their disability needs. General needs accommodation may need to be adapted to make it suitable for those with disability needs.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

- Online Application Process: Online applications are a means by which the Council can ensure the efficient management of applications for those seeking to join the Council's housing register. The Council provides contact details for the Housing Options team on the Housing Allocation Policy and partner agencies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau also have access to the Council's contact details. The Housing Options team can provide assistance to those who have no alternative means of accessing the applications online and/or refer applicants to an advice agency, such as Two Saints, and where appropriate, advocacy services through Solent Mind.

- Incentive to Work - The government has made clear that it wishes local authorities to provide incentives for applicants to work or make a positive contribution to the local community. The Council has introduced this provision to achieve this objective and whilst it recognises that there might be a negative impact on those with a disability, it is considered that by ensuring that this provision can be satisfied by those who are making a community contribution, for example by voluntary work, it is striking a proportionate balance between its identified objective and minimising the adverse impact on those with this protected characteristic. The Council also recognises that it will need to monitor the number of applicants on its housing register who are disabled and who qualify for this provision and where appropriate make changes as may be required to minimise an adverse impact on them.

Suitable Accommodation: The Council employs an occupational therapist who, where appropriate, will inspect the suitability of accommodation when an allocation is made. Furthermore, the Council prioritises applicants who have a disability for specific types of properties, such as adapted properties and bungalows. It will also make direct offers where appropriate to ensure that these properties go to those who have most need for them.

Gender Reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

Whilst the policy changes will have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic group, the Council recognises that its Incentive to Work may have an impact on transgender applicants.

⁸ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/give-for-mental-wellbeing/>

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan (continued)

- Incentive to Work – It is recognised that transgender applicants are particularly at risk of housing crisis and homelessness arising from transphobic reaction by family, neighbours and members of the community. This may make it difficult for them to obtain work or undertake formal voluntary work.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

- Incentive to Work - The government has made clear that it wishes local authorities to provide incentives for applicants to work or make a positive contribution to the local community. The Council has introduced this provision to achieve this objective. Further, applicants who are made homeless through a hate crime can be placed within the higher bands of the allocation scheme, thus improving their prospects of rehousing without the need to be engaged in work, whether voluntary or otherwise.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage and civil partnership is the legal recognition of a relationship.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

There are no specific issues that it is believed would discriminate or disadvantage married couples or those in a civil partnership.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

None identified, however, it is recognised that continued monitoring will need to be undertaken to ensure there are no adverse impacts on those in this protected characteristic group.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The Council do not take into consideration unborn children which may impact on applicant's ability to be considered for larger sized properties during their pregnancy.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

Whilst it is recognised that pregnant women may feel disadvantaged by the Council's policy to not take into consideration unborn children, the Council's objective in doing this is to ensure that it is able to effectively manage its stock given the demand on family sized accommodation and also to ensure compliance with the Welfare Reform Act 2012⁹, to avoid affordability issues for under- occupiers.

⁹ Paragraph 4.22 of the Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England.

Race:

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

Whilst the main proposed changes to the Council's Allocations Policy are likely to have a neutral impact on this protected characteristic group, the local connection provisions may have an impact on those of certain ethnic groups, including members of any BME groups, particularly blacks, Indian, EEA nationals and travellers.

From the 2011 Census, 97% of the Council's residents were within the "White British" ethnic group. Of other residents, 0.2% identified as being from the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community, 0.9% as being of a mixed ethnicity, 0.9% as Asian British and 0.3% as being Black British¹⁰. It is recognised that in particular travellers as part of their cultural identity need to have free movement and the local connection provisions will have an impact on those in this particular group. The majority of residents in the District were born within the UK (94%) with only a minority born outside the UK: 2.1% born in Europe, 1.3% in the Middle East, 1.1% in Africa and 0.8% in The Americas, the Caribbean and Oceania¹¹; suggesting that some BME residents might have moved to the District from abroad and be affected by the local connection criteria. The Council also recognises that those who have had to flee their own country of origins and seek asylum in the United Kingdom will be impacted by the Council's local connection provisions.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

- **Local connection:** The Council has set 2 years or 10 years previously as its local connection criteria for residence. However, it also recognises employment within the Council's district and has set exceptions to those who will have to satisfy the local connection criteria. The Council's approach is a proportionate means of enabling the Council to achieve the objective of promoting local priorities when allocating social housing within its district whilst minimising negative impacts on those who have these protected characteristics. Furthermore, the Council has a residual discretion as set out in the policy to enable it to dispense with any of the provisions of the policy in exceptional circumstances, and in particular, where failing to do so would be in breach of the Council's duties as contained in the Equality Act 2010. Accordingly, when making decisions as to whether discretion should be exercised, the Council will be focused on the need to ensure compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to those who fall within these protected characteristic groups. It is recognised that continued monitoring will need to be undertaken to ensure there are no adverse impacts on those in these protected characteristic group. In particular, better data will need to be collected from applicants to monitor the impact of the local connection provisions on those with these protected characteristics.

¹⁰ https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000091#section_6_4

¹¹ http://www3.hants.gov.uk/2011_census_new_forest_summary_factsheet.pdf

Sex:

A man or a woman.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

Gender is an issue in relation to economic status with women being adversely impacted. Generally, women experience lower levels of economic activity than man.

The local connection provisions may also impact on women who are more likely to be fleeing domestic abuse and therefore not be able to satisfy the Council's criteria.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

- Incentive to Work: The government has made clear that it wishes local authorities to provide incentives for applicants to work or make a positive contribution to the local community. The Council has introduced this provision to achieve this objective and whilst it is recognised that there might be a negative impact on women who are not working (for example because of childcare reasons); it is noted that there has been an increase in women in work for the last 40 years¹². The Council also recognises local community contribution which women would also have the ability to participate in, for example volunteering in schools. Further, it considers that this initiative strikes the most proportionate and least intrusive measure to strike a balance between the objective identified and the need to avoid adverse impacts on those with this particular protected characteristic.
- Local Connection: The Council has set 2 years or 10 years in the past as its local connection criteria for residence. However, it also recognises employment within the Council's district and has set exceptions to those who will have to satisfy the local connection criteria; including for those owed duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. The Council's approach is a proportionate means of enabling the Council to achieve the objective of promoting local priorities when allocating social housing within its district whilst minimising negative impacts on those who have this protected characteristic. Furthermore, the Council has a residual discretion as set out in the policy to enable it to dispense with any of the provisions of the policy in exceptional circumstances, and in particular, where failing to do so would be in breach of the Council's duties as contained in the Equality Act 2010. Accordingly, when making decisions as to whether discretion should be exercised, the Council will be focused on the need to ensure compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to those who fall within this protected characteristic group. It is recognised that continued monitoring will need to be undertaken to ensure there are no adverse impacts on those in this protected characteristic group.

¹²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/womeninthelabourmarket/2013-09-25>

Sexual Orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The policy will have a neutral impact on those in this protected characteristic group.

However, the Council recognises that it needs to maintain and collect accurate data that will enable it to monitor how its policies are impacting those with this protected characteristic.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

None identified

Religion and Belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live it to be included in the definition.

Potential Impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan

The policy will have a neutral impact on those in this protected characteristic group.

However, the Council recognises that it needs to maintain and collect accurate data that will enable it to monitor how its policies are impacting those with this protected characteristic.

Mitigating Actions to be Taken and/or Justification

None identified

Further Action

It is noted that in order to ensure accurate monitoring of the impact of its allocation policy on those with a protected characteristic, the Council will need to collect full and accurate data for those who are applying to join its register and also those who are being allocated accommodation by it. In particular, in relation to areas surrounding the Incentive to Work, Local Connection and Online Applications.

The Council will also need to ensure that it undertakes appropriate Equality Analysis whenever, it sets Local Lettings Policies or it applies sensitive lettings provisions.

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ALLOCATION POLICY (DRAFT)

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NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL: HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 The Housing Act 1996 (“the Act”) Part VI as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011, requires all local authorities to have an allocation policy to determine the priorities and define the procedures that will be followed when allocating housing accommodation. This document sets out New Forest District Council’s (“the Council”) policy for the allocation of social housing accommodation in its district (“the Scheme”). The Scheme sets out details on how Applications will be assessed, processed and how decisions will be made.

1.2 In drafting the Scheme the Council has had regard to the following:

A. Statutes:

- (i) The Act;
- (ii) The Homelessness Act 2002
- (iii) The Housing Act 2004;
- (iv) The Equalities Act 2010;
- (v) The Localism Act 2011;
- (vi) Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

B. Regulations:

- Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulation 1997, SI 199/483;
- Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002; SI 2002/3264;
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294;
- Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012; SI 2012/1869;
- Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012; SI 2012/2989
- Allocation for Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 SI 2015/967
- The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2018 SI 2018/730.

C. Codes of Guidance:

- (i) Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Authorities for Local Housing Authorities in England (DCLG, 2012);

- (ii) Providing Social Housing for Local People: Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities in England (DCLG, December 2013);
- (iii) Right to Move: Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Housing Authorities in England (DCLG, March 2015);
- (iv) Improving Access to Social Housing for Victims of Domestic Abuse in Refuges or other Types of Temporary Accommodation (MHCLG, November 2018)
- (v) Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018.

D. Consultation outcome with Applicants, residents in the Council’s district and all Private Registered Providers of Social Housing (“PRPSH”) and registered social landlords (“RSL”) with whom the Council has nomination rights.

E. the Council’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Tenancy Strategy

1.3 When drafting an allocation policy the Act requires that local authorities give reasonable preference to people with high levels of assessed housing need. The Act has determined that the following class of individuals should be given a reasonable preference. People who:

- are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the Act). This will include those who have been found to be homeless but not in priority need, who are owed the “Relief Duty” and who have been found to be intentionally homeless;
- are owed a duty by any local housing authority under ss.193(2), 192(2) or 195(2) (or under ss. 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985);
- are occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating disability); and
- need to move to a particular locality of the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

This group is collectively known as the “Reasonable Preference Group”.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

2.1 The Council will allocate housing in a fair and transparent manner with the aim of using its scarce housing resources appropriately, and in particular to enable it to meet:

- a. Its prevention and homelessness statutory duties;
- b. the housing needs of those that are most vulnerable; and
- c. its statutory obligations as set out in Part VI of the Act

2.2 The Council also aims to operate the Scheme so that it:

- (a) Gives Applicants as much choice as possible and helps to create and maintain sustainable local communities;
- (b) Promotes good standards of tenancy and financial management by tenants and prospective tenants and to assist in tackling anti-social behaviour; and
- (c) To provide incentives for residents in the Council's district to undertake paid work and make a positive contribution to the local community.

3 STATEMENT OF CHOICE

3.1 The Council and its partner landlords are committed to giving Applicants for housing as much choice as possible as to where they wish to live. Under the Scheme, Applicants are normally able to apply for vacancies of individual properties which are advertised each week.

PART 2: THE SCHEME

4 JOINING THE HOUSING REGISTER

4.1 The Council operates a housing register ("the Register") which contains a list of people who have applied to the Council for housing. Anyone seeking social housing within the Council's district must make an Application to join the Register. This will normally be done by making an online Application on the Council's website. Only Applicants who are eligible and qualify for allocation of social housing will be able to join the Register.

4.2 All Applications to join the Register will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme as set out in the paragraphs below.

4.3 Eligibility

4.3.1 Certain people from abroad, including some subject to immigration control, are not eligible for an allocation of social housing. These are known as Restricted Persons. The government has set out those who are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation. For further details on eligibility, please refer to Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification at page 40.

4.4 Qualifying Applicants

4.4.1 Under the Act, the Council is entitled to set its own qualifying criteria to determine who should be considered for an allocation of housing.

4.4.2 Applicants will qualify to join the Register if they satisfy all 4 of the criteria listed below.

They:

- (a) Are Over 16 years of age¹;
- (b) Are in Housing Need; in that the Applicant's housing circumstances fall within one of the Scheme's Bands (see paragraph 5.1 Housing Need Assessment)
- (c) Have been assessed as lacking the financial means to enable them to resolve their housing need; and
- (d) Have a local connection to the Council's district.

4.5 Non Qualifying Applicants

4.5.1 Applicants who fall within the description of people below will not qualify to join the Register:

Applicants who:

- (a) Fail to meet the qualifying criteria at paragraph 4.4.2 above;
- (b) Are an owner-occupier (with the exception of those with a housing and assessed care need, who cannot resolve their own housing situation and have a need for extra-care or sheltered accommodation);
- (c) Have deliberately worsened their circumstances to enable them to qualify onto the Register; or
- (d) Are deemed to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour that is serious enough to make them unsuitable as tenants.

For further details of the qualifying criteria and non-qualifying Applicants, please refer to Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification at page 40.

4.6 Decisions Following Assessment of Eligibility and Qualification

4.6.1 Where a decision is made that an Applicant is either not eligible or non-qualifying they will be notified in writing of that decision and of their right to request a review. (See paragraph 7.5 for details of the reviews process.)

5. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

5.1 HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 The Council uses a banding system to prioritise Applications on the Register. The Scheme has 4 bands. With the exception as set out at paragraph 5.1.2 below, in order to qualify to join the Register an Applicant's Housing Need will have to fall within one of the Scheme's Bands.

5.1.2 Applicants, who satisfy a Rural Connection Band for a Rural Parish, will be assessed as being in Housing Need and are exempt from having to satisfy paragraph 5.1.1 above. Please refer to paragraph 5.5 Rural Connection Band.

¹ Whilst Applicants aged 16 -17 will be able to join the Register, they will not be made an allocation of a property under the Scheme until they attain the age of 18.

5.1.3 The Scheme Bands:

The table below outlines in summary the criteria for each band:

BAND	CRITERIA
Band 1 – Emergency Need for Housing	Applicants: (a) Who require a management move: where the applicant has been assessed as having an exceptional need to move by a Senior Officer. (b) Who have been assessed as having an urgent health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (c) Whose accommodation has been assessed as being in a state of emergency disrepair and the hazards cannot be rectified within a reasonable timescale; or (d) Who need to move to escape violence or threats of violence, harassment or a traumatic event in the home.

<p>Band 2. Serious Need for Housing</p>	<p>Applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Who have been accepted as being owed the full housing duty under the Act and where discharge of duty cannot be achieved by a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation; (b) Who are existing social housing tenants under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms; (c) Who are severely overcrowded (e.g they lack 2 or more bedrooms, or have 2 children who lack a bedroom, such as a single parent with 2 children, where at least one of the children is over the age of 1 in a 1 bed home); (d) Who have been assessed as having a high health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstance; (e) Who live in a home assessed as being in a state of high disrepair and the disrepair cannot be rectified within reasonable timescales; or (f) Who have been assessed as ready to move on from supported housing in the Council's district area.
<p>Band 3 – Need for Housing</p>	<p>Applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Are overcrowded and lack 1 bedroom; (b) Have been assessed as having medium health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (c) Are certain serving, or former serving members of the regular forces, or their spouse or civil partner; (d) Are homeless, to whom the Council owes a Relief or Prevention Duty under Part VII of the Act; (e) Who need to move under the Right to Move provisions; (f) Are existing social landlord tenants under-occupying their accommodation by 1 bedroom;

<p>Band 3 – Need for Housing (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (g) Have been assessed as not having a permanent home, or are at risk of becoming homeless and are not owed a duty under (d) above; (h) Have been accepted as being owed the full housing duty under Part VII of the Act and where it is possible to discharge duty with a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation; or (i) Are key workers where the Council identifies that there is a critical need for the key worker to be rehoused to ensure the availability of an essential public service for the New Forest community.
<p>Band 4 – Lower Need for Housing</p>	<p>Applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Have been assessed as having a lower health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; (b) Share essential facilities such as a toilet, bath, shower or kitchen with other households or lack essential facilities; (c) Are households sharing with relatives or friends; (d) Are occupants living in supported accommodation who have not been assessed as ready for move on from supported housing in the Council's area. (j) Are assured shorthold tenants who do not have the financial means to purchase a property (see Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification); or (k) Have been assessed under Part VII of the Act as not in priority need or are intentionally homeless and are still statutory homeless at the point of offer.

Further details of the Housing Need Assessment can be found at Appendix 3: Scheme Bands on page 45.

5.2 HOUSEHOLD

5.2.1 The following individuals will form part of an Applicant's Household under the Scheme:

- The Applicant's Partner;
- The Applicant's children/dependants aged 35 and under with whom the Applicant resides or with whom the Applicant might reasonably be expected to reside.

5.2.2 In determining whether children/dependants can reasonably be expected to reside with the Applicant the Council will take into consideration the following factors:

- Access to other suitable accommodation;
- Previous, current and likely future living arrangements;
- Evidence of membership to the Household (including whether the Applicant is in receipt of relevant benefits for the child/dependant);
- The impact on scarce housing resources on providing the Applicant with additional bedrooms.

Whilst court orders will be taken into consideration, they will not be determinative.

5.2.3 Applicants, who the Council has accepted require a carer to live with them will be allowed to include the carer as a member of their Household. In deciding whether a carer is required to live with an Applicant, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- Whether there is an established need for live-in 24 hour care;
- The availability of supported or extra-care housing which may meet the Applicant's care needs;
- The Applicant's current, and likely future, living arrangements;
- The impact on scarce housing resources on providing an additional bedroom to the Applicant.

5.3 THE BEDROOM NEED ASSESSMENT

5.3.1 Following the Housing Need Assessment the Council will assess the number of bedrooms that an Applicant is entitled to by looking at the size and structure of the Applicant's Household as set out at paragraph 5.2 above. This will establish the Applicant's Bedroom Need and the size of property that the Applicant will be able to bid for.

5.3.2 The Council's Bedroom Need Assessment has been set in line with current regulations affecting bedroom entitlement for the purposes of the Local Housing Allowance and Housing Benefit. It also reflects the bedroom entitlement that will be used for the purpose of assessing the housing component associated with rental liability within Universal Credit.

5.3.3 The Scheme’s Bedroom Need Assessment is set as follows:

PROPERTY TYPE/SIZE	HOUSEHOLD
Bedsit	Single Applicant
1 Bedroom	Single Applicant or Applicants living as a couple with no children
2 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 1 child; or Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 2 children of: (a) The same sex under 16 (b) Opposite sex under 10
3 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple with 2 children, with at least 1 of opposite sex over 10; Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 3 children or 4 children: (a) of the same sex under 16; (b) Two children of each sex under 16; or (c) of either sex all under 10
4 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 5 or more children Single Applicant or Applicants living as a couple, with 4 children where at least one of them is aged 10 and is of the opposite sex of the others or one of them is aged 16 or over.

5.3.4 Pregnant Applicants or those Households with a pregnant member will not have their bedroom requirement reviewed until the baby is born and a copy of the birth certificate for the child has been received.

5.3.5 The Council reserves the right to assess an Applicant as being entitled to more or less bedrooms, provided this does not result in an overcrowding hazard, where this will lead to the effective management of its housing stock or where the circumstances justify the adjustment. This may apply where an Applicant cannot share a bedroom with their Partner due to their disability.

5.3.6 If an Applicant has been recommended by Children’s Services as suitable to foster or adopt one or more children, but requires additional bedroom(s) in order to be able to adopt or foster, the Applicant will be considered for an additional bedroom. When conducting the Bedroom Need Assessment for prospective foster carers or adopters who state that they need additional bedrooms for their application to foster or adopt to be successful, the Council will consider the risk that the application to foster or adopt may not be successful against the wider benefits which would be realised if a placement was successful. This may mean contacting Children’s Services to

determine how the lack of the additional bedroom will affect the prospective carer's or adopter's application to foster or adopt.

5.4 BAND START DATE

5.4.1 The Band Start Date records the date that an Applicant is deemed to have joined the Register. The Band Start Date will be determined as follows:

(a) New Applications:

The Band Start Date will be the date that the Application is processed and placed into a Band.

(b) Existing Applicants:

(i) If an existing Applicant's Housing Need has been re-assessed due to a change in circumstance, their Band Start Date will be as follows:

REASSESSMENT OUTCOME	BAND START DATE
Move into a higher band	Date of Re-assessment
Moved into a lower band	Retain original Band Start Date
Remain in same band (including for a different housing need)	Retain original Band Start Date

(ii) Transitional Arrangement: Applicants who were registered on the Council's Homeseach Allocation Scheme 2 prior to the adoption of the Scheme will be able to keep as their Band Start Date the date of their application under the Homeseach Allocation Scheme 2. Where there has been a change in their Housing Need since their original application under the Homeseach Allocation Scheme 2, their Housing Need will be re-assessed and a new Band Start Date given in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (b)(i) above.

5.4.2 Homeless Applicants who are owed the Full Housing Duty under the Act and are placed in Band 2 following the Housing Need Assessment will have the date the Council made the decision on the duty owed to them as their Band Start Date.

5.5 RURAL CONNECTION BAND

5.5.1 Some of the Council's social housing is located in Rural Parishes. The Council believes these properties should be allocated so as to ensure that:

- Rural communities are supported in a sustainable way wherever possible; and
- People that are deemed to satisfy a Rural Connection Band to the Rural Parish are given priority in the allocation of vacancies.

5.5.2 Accordingly, Applicants who wish to be considered for an allocation of a property in a Rural Parish will need to satisfy one of the Rural Connection Band criteria as set out below. For a list of the Rural Parishes please refer to paragraph 5.6.3 (Areas of Choice).

RURAL CONNECTION BAND	CRITERIA
Band A	Applicants who live or are in Employment in the Rural Parish and have been so for longer than 10 years or who have lived in the Rural Parish for longer than 10 years previously or a designated key-worker performing an essential service for the Rural Parish community where there is an established need for the Applicant to be rehoused to maintain the service.
Band B	Applicants who live or are in Employment in the Rural Parish and have done so for longer than 5 years, or who have lived in the Rural Parish for more than 5 years within the last 15 years, or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the Rural Parish and have done so for 10 years or longer.
Band C	Applicants who live or are in Employment in the Rural Parish and have done so for longer than 2 years, or who have lived in the Rural Parish for more than 2 years within the last 15 years or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the Rural Parish and have done so for 5 years or more.

5.5.3 Applicants who do not satisfy any of the Rural Connection Band criteria will only be eligible for an allocation of a property in a Rural Parish in the circumstances set out at paragraph 6.2.1.4 (d).

5.5.4 Where an Applicant has been placed in temporary accommodation situated in a Rural Parish the time spent in the Rural Parish will not count towards satisfying a Rural Connection Band. However, if the Applicant has established a longstanding connection with the Rural Parish during their occupation and has made a significant contribution to the local community, then they may be considered to have a Rural Connection Band. Any decision to allow the time spent in temporary accommodation to be taken into consideration when assessing Rural Connection Band is reserved to a Senior Officer.

5.6 AREAS OF CHOICE

5.6.1 For administrative and management purposes, when Applicants join the Register they will be asked to stipulate which areas they would like to be housed in.

5.6.2 The areas listed below are available for selection by all Applicants on the Register:

AREA
Ashley
Blackfield and Langley
Calmore
Calshot
Dibden and Dibden Purlieu
Eling
Fawley
Fordingbridge
Holbury and Hardley
Hythe
Lymington
Marchwood
New Milton
Pennington
Ringwood
Totton
Walkford

5.6.3 The areas listed below are Rural Parishes. Please refer to paragraph 5.5 Rural Connection Band at pages 13 – 14.

RURAL PARISH	RURAL PARISH
Ashurst/Colbury	Minstead
Beaulieu	Netley Marsh/Woodlands
Boldre/Pilley/Norley Wood	Rockbourne
Brangore/Sopley	Sandleheath
Breamore	Sway
Brockenhurst	Whitsbury
Brook/Bramshaw	Woodgreen
Burley	
Copythorne/Bartley	
Damerham	
Denny Lodge	
East Boldre/East End	
Ellingham/Harbridge/Ibsley	
Exbury/Lepe	
Godshill	
Hale	
Hordle	
Hyde	
Lyndhurst	
Martin	
Milford	

5.7 ACCEPTANCE ONTO THE REGISTER

5.7.1 Once all information has been received from an Applicant, and where appropriate supporting agencies, the Applicant will be notified in writing of the following:

- Their Band Start Date;
- The Band in which their Application has been placed;
- Their reference number to be used for bidding;
- Their assessed Bedroom Need;
- A summary of the Scheme

5.7.2 If further information is required, the Applicant will be contacted in writing and will be asked to provide the information necessary to assess their Application. Any Applicant who does not provide the requested information within 28 days, or where the Application was made on-line, who fails to submit supporting documents within 28 days, will be assumed to no longer require housing and their Application will be treated as abandoned. Their Application will not be processed further.

6. THE CHOICE BASED ALLOCATION PROCESS

6.1 MANAGING VACANCIES

6.1.1 All vacancies will be let under the following choice-based allocation process unless they have specifically been excluded, please see paragraph 6.3 below.

6.1.2 Labelling Properties

6.1.2.1 The Council will set parameters on which type of Households can apply for vacancies. As part of the labelling process full details of each vacancy will be provided and will include the following:

- Type of property;
- Street location;
- Rent, and if appropriate, service charge payable;
- Access to the property (including wheelchair adapted);
- Landlord;
- Number of bedrooms and permitted numbers of occupants (with reference to the Bedroom Need Assessment);
- Specific requirements as specified by the landlord;
- Where appropriate, the Household type that will be given preference;
- Whether or not pets are allowed.

6.1.2.2 In addition to the above, other circumstances may apply which require particular labelling of properties, schemes or estates. The examples below are for illustrative purposes only and are not exhaustive:

- Where the Council is able to create vacancies within the affordable stock in its district which could increase the number of available homes, then properties may be labelled so that preference is given to Transfer Applicants.
- Where a property is adapted for disabled use or where it has been provided for a specific purpose, such as supported accommodation, it will be labelled for Applicants who require adapted or supported accommodation.
- Where a property is situated in an Age Restricted Scheme, it will be labelled for Applicants that satisfy the age restriction of the scheme.
- If there is a planning requirement for a scheme (ie s.106 agreements), vacancies in that scheme will be labelled according to the planning requirements. Similarly, if a scheme has been developed with a specific Applicant group then the labelling will reflect this.
- Where the vacancy is in a Rural Parish the labelling will require that the Applicant has been awarded a Rural Connection Band to the Rural Parish.
- If there is an established need for designated key-workers to be re-housed to ensure the availability of a critical public service within the Council's district area and a Senior Officer has determined that this need takes priority over other housing needs within the Council's district, the vacancy will be labelled to give key-workers who are able to provide that service a preference.
- If it is known that there are a large number of Applicants who are in Bands 1-2 or with a particular need for a vacancy, the labelling of the property may be more specific to reduce the number of Applicants who can bid for the vacancy.
- Where the Council is seeking to reduce the numbers of homeless Households in temporary accommodation, a vacancy may be labelled with a preference for those Households who have been accepted as homeless.
- Where sensitive allocations are required because of the needs of other vulnerable or elderly tenants, labelling may stipulate that the successful Applicant needs to be able to demonstrate that they will be able to manage a tenancy successfully.

6.1.3 Advertising

6.1.3.1 Unless excluded from the lettings process, all properties will be advertised to provide Applicants with the best possible chance of exercising choice. Applicants will find vacancies advertised on the Council's website. Where a property is for a specific Applicant group who require support contact may be made (as far as resources allow) to ensure that this group are able to bid for the vacancy.

6.1.3.2 The advert will be labelled as set out at paragraphs 6.1.2.1 and 6.1.2.2 above.

6.1.3.3 Each property will normally be advertised for a period of 5 days. Where a property has not attracted any bids and/or bids from Applicants that satisfy the labelling criteria for the vacancy, it may be re-advertised to increase the number of Applicants who can bid for the vacancy.

6.1.4 Applying for Vacancies

6.1.4.1 Interested Applicants will be able to bid for a vacancy electronically by placing a bid via their Council website account before the advert expiry date. Applicants are entitled to bid for a maximum of 3 vacancies each week.

6.1.5 Assisted Bidding

6.1.5.1 Where an Applicant requires assistance in bidding for vacancies, because the Applicant is vulnerable or where there is a language barrier, then the Housing Options team may assist the Applicant to bid for vacancies or refer the Applicant to an agency that will be able to assist the Applicant to do so. Applicants will be asked during the application process if they require assistance and if they wish the Housing Options team to manage their bids on their behalf. The Housing Options team will assess whether the Applicant meets the criteria for Assisted Bidding.

6.1.5.2 Where an Applicant qualifies for Assisted Bidding, the Housing Options team will only make bids on behalf of the Applicant if the vacancy meets the Applicant's preferences and Bedroom Need. Applicants can also ask for assistance with bidding at any time by contacting the Housing Options team or through contact from an agency. Where appropriate the Housing Options team may also enquire whether an Applicant requires assistance following a review of an Applicant's bidding history.

6.1.5.3 An Applicant will only be assisted with making their bids if they are unable to do so because of vulnerability or because there is a language barrier. Where appropriate, Applicants will be encouraged to access facilities at the Council's offices, use family/friends or the library to access the website to place bids.

6.1.6 Automatic Bidding

6.1.6.1 To increase the prospects of re-housing Applicants, the Council may make bids on behalf of some Applicants on the Register.

6.1.6.2 The Housing Options team will only bid on vacancies that are suitable for the Applicant's Household and that the Applicant has the best chance of securing. Whilst consideration will be given to the Applicants preferences, the overriding consideration will be the effective management of the social housing stock, or where appropriate, the duty to move on Homeless Applicants to more settled housing solutions. In some cases the Housing Options team may encourage an Applicant to increase their preferences to maximise their prospects of being rehoused.

6.1.6.3 The Housing Options team will normally bid on behalf of the following Applicants:

- Applicants in Band 1;
- Homeless Applicants in Band 2 or in Band 3 who are owed the Relief or Prevention Duty;

- Band 2: Under-occupying by 2 bedrooms;
- Band 3: Under-occupying by 1 bedroom

6.1.6.4 The Housing Options team will bid on behalf of an Applicant if the Applicant has failed to bid for suitable properties that have become available in a 6 month period and/or where the bidding history of the Applicant shows they have not made sufficient bids for properties having regard to the number of suitable properties that have become available in a 6 month period. The Housing Options team may also bid on properties where it would assist in the effective management of the Council's housing stock.

6.1.6.5 Where a bid made on behalf of an Applicant is successful, the Applicant will be made an offer of the accommodation secured by the automatic bid.

6.1.6.6 Homeless Applicants:

- The Applicant will be advised that the offer is made in discharge of the duty owed to them as a Homeless Applicant and the consequences of refusal. They will be notified of their right to request a review of the suitability of the offer and that this right is available whether they accept or refuse the offer.
- If the Applicant refuses the offer and lodges an unsuccessful suitability review, or fails to lodge a review request at all, their Application will be suspended for a period of 6 months. The Council will discharge the homeless duty. Following the period of suspension, if the Applicant still wishes to remain on the Register, the Application will be reinstated to Band 3 and will retain the same Band Start Date. However, if there has been a change in circumstance the Application will be re-assessed and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

6.1.6.7 Other Applicants

- The Applicant will be notified of their right to request a review of the suitability of the offer and that they can request a review whether or not they accept the offer. If within a 12 month period, an Applicant refuses two offers of accommodation that are deemed suitable following a review, or where no suitability review was lodged, their Application will be suspended for a period of 6 months. Applicants who fail to respond to an offer will be treated as though they had refused the offer. Following the period of suspension, if the Applicant still wishes to remain on the Register, the Application will be reinstated to Band 3 and will retain the same Band Start Date. However, if there has been a change in circumstance the Application will be re-assessed and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

6.1.6.8 If the Applicant accepts the offer but lodges an unsuccessful suitability review, or does not lodge a suitability review at all, their Application will be removed from the Register.

6.1.6.9 An Applicant whose Application has been suspended, has been placed in a lower Band or removed from the Register, will be notified of this decision and of their right to request a review of it; please see paragraph 7.5 for details of the reviews process. The Applicant will be entitled to re-apply to join the Register or seek higher banding if their circumstances change, or have changed, since the decision was made.

6.2 ALLOCATING PROPERTIES

6.2.1 Selection Procedure

6.2.1.1 Once the time limit for placing bids on an advert has expired, the bids for a vacancy will be considered. Any bids placed after the time limit has expired will be excluded from consideration.

6.2.1.2 Applicants who do not meet the labelling criteria of the vacancy will be excluded from consideration. Where the advert for the vacancy specified Households who would be given a preference for the vacancy, the Applicants who satisfy the preferences will be considered before those Applicants who do not. Applications will then be prioritised.

6.2.1.3 Prioritisation Generally

- a) First, by their Band, for example all Applicants in Band 1 will be listed above all Applicants in Bands 2, those in Band 2 will be listed above all those in Band 3 and so on.
- b) Then, by the Band Start date; with the Applicant with the earliest Band Start Date and highest Band at the top.

The vacancy will be allocated to the Applicant who is at the top following the above prioritisation.

6.2.1.4 Prioritisation – Rural Parishes

- a) Applicants will be prioritised with reference to the strength of their connection with the Rural Parish and Band as follows:

Order of Prioritisation	Rural Connection Band (RCB) and Housing Need Band
1.	RCB A with a Band 1 Housing Need
2.	RCB A with a Band 2 Housing Need
3.	RCB A or RCB A with Band 3 or Band 4 Housing Need
4.	RCB B with a Band 1 Housing Need
5.	RCB B with a Band 2 Housing Need
6.	RCB B or RCB B with Band 3 or Band 4 Housing Need
7.	RCB C with a Band 1 Housing Need
8.	RCB C with a Band 2 Housing Need
9.	RCB C or RCB C with Band 3 or Band 4 Housing Need

- b) Applicants who fall within 3, 6 and 9 in the table above will be treated equally within their grouping. Applicants will then be prioritised by Band Start Date. The vacancy will be allocated to the Applicant with the earliest Band Start Date at the top following prioritisation in accordance with the table at 6.2.1.4 (a) above.
- c) Where the vacancy is in a Rural Parish and no bids are received from an Applicant with a Rural Connection Band for that Rural Parish, the Council will re-advertise the vacancy and set new labelling criteria to increase the prospects of the vacancy going to an Applicant with a Rural Connection Band for the Rural Parish. In re-advertising the vacancy the Council may change the labelling criteria to allow under or over-occupation. However, the Council will only allocate a vacancy to an under-occupier if affordability will not be an issue and to an over occupier where it will not result in a Category 1 Hazard. If the vacancy can still not be filled, the Council will increase the geographical area to allow bids from nearby Rural Parishes and will also consider labelling the vacancy to allow for over or under-occupation (subject to affordability and avoiding Category 1 Hazard).
- d) If a vacancy in a Rural Parish is still not filled after re-advertising it as above, the vacancy will be made available to the whole district.

6.2.1.5 Following Prioritisation

- a) If after the Applications have been prioritised as set out in paragraphs 6.2.1.3 or 6.2.1.4, there are two or more Applicants at the top of the list, the Council will carry out an assessment of the Applicants' circumstances to determine who has the greatest Housing Need for the particular vacancy. This may include taking into consideration whether an Applicant has more than one Housing Need, the size of the Household and its make-up to ensure the best use of the property.
- b) If an Applicant confirms that they wish to be considered for a vacancy they will not be able to bid on any other vacancies whilst they are being considered. Any open bids that the Applicant has for other vacancies will be ignored during the period of consideration.
- c) If an Applicant is the successful bidder for more than one vacancy they will have to choose which vacancy they want to be considered for. In order to ensure effective management of the Register, Applicants will not be able to be considered for more than one vacancy at any one time.
- d) If an Applicant is made an offer of a vacancy they will normally have 24 hours in which to make a decision. If the Applicant needs more time and/or support to make the decision, they will need to notify the Housing Options team within 24 hours of the offer being made. Subject to consent having been given and/or appropriate data sharing agreements being in place, if the Council is aware that the Applicant is

receiving support from a support agency, the support agency will be notified when the Applicant is made an offer of a vacancy.

6.2.2 Special Allocations

6.2.2.1 Sensitive Lettings

- a) Occasionally, there will be a need to assist in dealing with issues that impact on a small, specific location to reduce the concentration of certain needs groups which is impacting on housing management; or to promote a more balanced community by seeking to select or exclude certain Households with particular characteristics.
- b) Where appropriate, this may be requested by a partner landlord; for example where a previous tenant had caused anti-social behaviour and it was deemed important to get the right mix of tenants in the area having regard to the needs of existing vulnerable or elderly tenants.
- c) The Council, and if appropriate, the partner landlord, may agree that an Applicant who has come top following prioritisation is not the most suitable and reserves the right to overlook the Applicant and make the offer to the next suitable Applicant.
- d) As indicated above, where a vacancy is a sensitive let, it will be clearly labelled as such. Where there is more than one property in an area that is affected this will be set out in an agreed Local Lettings Policy.

6.2.2.2 Age Restricted Schemes

- a) Some of the Council's vacancies are situated in Age Restricted Schemes. Applicants will only be able to bid for these vacancies if they meet the age restriction criteria. Any such vacancy will be clearly labelled as an Age Restricted Scheme.
- b) To ensure the effective management of the Council's housing stock, the Council reserves the right to increase or reduce the number of Age Restricted Schemes or alter the age restrictions as may be deemed appropriate; the decision to do so is reserved to a Senior Officer.

6.2.2.3 Incentive to Work

- a) Local authorities are encouraged to consider how they can support those Households who want to work, as well as those who, while unable to engage in paid work, are contributing to their communities in other ways, for example voluntary work.²
- b) In order to provide incentives for Applicants to work or make a positive contribution to the local community, a percentage of all general needs housing will be advertised so that a

²Paragraph 4.27 of the Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England.

preference is given to Applicants, who are in Employment or who are making a contribution to their community, for example by voluntary work. A decision as to whether an Applicant is making a contribution to their community, for example by voluntary work, is reserved to a Senior Officer. The annual percentage will be set between 10 – 20%.

- c) The incentive to work provisions will be regularly monitored to ensure that the Council is complying with its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

6.2.2.4 Local Letting Policies

- a) The Act allows the Council to adopt Local Letting Policies. This allows the Council to allocate housing to a specific group of people, whether or not they come within the Reasonable Preference Group. In setting Local Lettings Policies, the Council has to ensure it complies with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any groups who have a protected characteristic and it needs to ensure that overall it has regard to its statutory duties to those in the Reasonable Preference Group.
- b) Local Lettings Policies will be used to ensure a mixed and balanced community. When agreed, these Local Lettings Policies will have their own specific allocation criteria. Properties that are subject to a Local Lettings Policy will be clearly labelled in the advert.
- c) A Local Lettings Policy may be applied in addition to any local planning restrictions that may be contained in an agreement made under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

6.2.3 Verification of Applications

6.2.3.1 The Council will undertake verification of all the relevant information provided by the Applicant. The verification of information includes obtaining evidence to confirm details given about the Applicant's family and housing situation.

6.2.3.2 The verification of information may be undertaken when the Application is received and will always be undertaken at the point of allocation.

6.2.3.3 Where the vacancy is with a partner landlord, for example a housing association, further verification, in accordance with the landlord's own verification processes and policy may be undertaken by the landlord. The landlord may also have additional qualifying criteria; particularly around affordability. Applicants will have to satisfy both the partner landlord and the Scheme's qualification criteria at verification to be made an allocation of the vacancy.

6.2.3.4 Verification will also include the gathering of information on suitability to be a tenant. If it becomes clear at the verification stage that an Applicant has demonstrated behaviour which may make them unsuitable to be a tenant (please refer to Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification at page 40 for further details) then they will not be offered the tenancy. The Applicant's banding and/or qualification to be on the Register will be re-assessed due to information obtained during the verification

process. This may result in an Applicant being moved into a lower Band or being removed from the Register. If an Applicant is overlooked for an allocation at the verification stage, the next suitable Applicant who came below the overlooked Applicant following prioritisation will be considered for the vacancy.

6.2.3.5 If following verification it is established that the property is not suitable for the Applicant, the Council reserves the right to prevent an offer of a property being progressed. If this happens, the next suitable Applicant who came below the overlooked Applicant following prioritisation will be considered for the vacancy.

6.2.3.6 The local ward member will be notified of an allocation of a vacancy in their Rural Parish.³

6.2.3.7 If it is not possible to complete verification of the Application within a reasonable period of time due to the Applicant's refusal to co-operate or because the Applicant is unable to provide the information needed to complete the verification process, the Applicant may be overlooked and the Applicant who came below the overlooked Applicant following prioritisation will be contacted.

6.2.3.8 Where following the verification process, an Applicant has been moved into another Band or has been removed from the Register, they will be advised of the reasons in writing. They will be notified of their right to request a review of the decision; please refer to paragraph 7.5 for further details of the reviews process.

6.2.3.9 Once the verification process has been completed, the Council, or the landlord, will contact the successful Applicant to make a provisional offer of a tenancy to them.

6.2.4 Publishing Details of the Allocation

6.2.4.1 Feedback on allocations provides Applicants with information to exercise choice and to gain information on the likely waiting time for re-housing. Details of the allocation will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible. Whilst the successful Applicant's name will not be published, their Band and the length of time they have been on the Register will be published.

6.3 EXCEPTIONS TO THE CHOICE BASED ALLOCATIONS PROCESS

6.3.1 Allocations Excluded From the Choice Based Allocations Process

6.3.1.1 Whilst most allocations will be managed through the choice based allocations process, there will be some circumstances when it will be necessary to exclude certain vacancies.

³ In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Allocations of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997 SI 483, elected members of the Council may not be involved in allocation decisions where the accommodation to be allocated, or the Applicant's sole or main residence, is in the member's ward.

6.3.1.2 Examples of the allocations that may be excluded from the choice based allocations process are:

- Management moves (carried out by the Council or housing association to assist in the good management of tenancies and its stock);
- Vacancies in Age Restricted Schemes, adapted properties or sensitive lets where no bids have been received from Applicants that satisfy the labelling criteria.
- For community safety, for example re-housing under the Multi-Agency Protection Panel Arrangements (MAPPA) or Witness Protection scheme;
- Where supported housing or extra care housing is being allocated;
- Where a Homeless Applicant is occupying a Council property on a non-secure basis and the property they are occupying is suitable for their needs;
- Where arrangements are in place for partner landlords to provide less than 100% of their properties for allocation.

6.3.1.3 Where an allocation has been excluded from the choice based allocations process, the Council will make an allocation of the vacancy to an Applicant who has not bid for it. This is known as a direct offer.

6.3.2 Direct Offers

6.3.2.1 The Council may make direct offers to the following:

- Applicants in Bands 1 and 2;
- Applicants being discharged from hospital or needing to go into supported or sheltered housing;
- Flexible tenants whose tenancy is due to, or has, expired and they have been assessed as having a continuing housing need but for alternative accommodation;
- Homeless Applicants occupying temporary accommodation that is suitable for their needs;
- Successors under-occupying their property or Vulnerable Occupants of Council accommodation where a decision has been made to allow them to remain in the property or to give them a tenancy of an alternative property;
- Remaining Vulnerable Occupants of Council accommodation on termination of a joint tenancy where a decision has been made to allow them to remain in that property or to give them a tenancy of an alternative property;
- Applicants needing specially adapted properties, properties in an Age Restricted Scheme or sensitive lets;
- Applicants requiring a management move or who require rehousing under MAPPA or Witness Protection scheme.

6.3.2.2 Any direct offer will meet the Applicant's assessed needs and should be suitable for the Applicant's Household.

6.3.2.3 Homeless Applicants:

- The Applicant will be advised that the offer is made in discharge of the duty owed to them as a Homeless Applicant and the consequences of refusal. They will be notified of their right to request a review of the suitability of the offer and that this right is available whether they accept or refuse the offer.
- If an Applicant refuses the offer and lodges an unsuccessful suitability review, or fails to lodge a review request at all, their Application will be suspended for a period of 6 months. The Council will discharge the homeless duty. Following the period of suspension, if the Applicant still wishes to remain on the Register, the Application will be reinstated to Band 3 and will retain the same Band Start Date. However, if there has been a change in circumstance the Application will be re-assessed and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

6.3.2.4 Other Applicants:

- When Applicants are made an offer, they will be notified of their right to request a review of the suitability of the offer and that this right is available whether they accept or refuse the offer. If an Applicant refuses 2 offers of accommodation that are deemed suitable following a review, or where no suitability review is lodged, within a 12 month period, their Application will be suspended for 6 months. Applicants who fail to respond to an offer will be treated as though they had refused the offer. Following the period of suspension, if the Applicant still wishes to remain on the Register, the Application will be reinstated to Band 3 and will retain the same Band Start Date. However, if there has been a change in circumstance the Applicant will be re-assessed and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

6.3.2.5 If an Applicant accepts an offer and lodges an unsuccessful suitability review, or does not lodge a suitability review at all, their Application will be removed from the Register.

6.3.2.6 An Applicant whose Application has been suspended, moved to a lower Band or been removed from the Register will be notified of this decision and of their right to request a review of it, please see paragraph 7.5 for details of the reviews process.

6.3.2.7 To ensure transparency and fairness, decisions to exclude allocations from the choice based allocations process and make a direct offer will be monitored to ensure that the decisions to do so are being properly exercised within limited boundaries.

6.4 OTHER ALLOCATION PROCESSES

6.4.1 A number of allocation processes do not constitute an allocation under the Act and operate outside of the normal allocation processes of the Scheme. This includes vacancies being let as temporary accommodation to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness or decants whilst repairs are undertaken.

6.4.2 Allocation of Temporary Housing

6.4.2.1 For allocations of temporary housing to homeless people or to prevent homelessness direct allocations will be made by the Homelessness and Housing Advice Officers.

6.4.2.2 The main aims of allocating temporary housing are to resolve homelessness, meet statutory requirements and to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

6.4.2.3 There are a number of situations in which homeless applicants can be waiting for temporary housing. The most common ones are:

- Accepted homeless applicants who have been placed in bed and breakfast;
- Accepted homeless applicants in other forms of emergency housing (refuge, staying with friends/relatives)
- Households already in temporary housing where the accommodation is going back to the owner;
- Households already in temporary accommodation where the accommodation is not suitable for their needs.

6.4.2.4 Allocations of temporary housing are a question of judgment for each individual vacancy, as the Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer will have to balance the needs and requirements of a number of different individuals in different circumstances. The matters which the Homelessness and Advice Officer must take into account include:

- Length of time a homeless applicant has been in bed and breakfast. Bed and breakfast is not suitable accommodation for homeless applicants with family commitments (including those who are pregnant) unless used in an emergency and then for a maximum of 6 weeks;
- The length of time homeless applicants have been in other forms of emergency housing awaiting temporary accommodation. Whilst refuge and other forms of emergency accommodation are normally more suitable than bed and breakfast, lengthy waits in emergency housing should be avoided where possible.
- Where temporary accommodation is going back to the owner and delays may cause families to be placed in bed and breakfast or significant difficulties to the landlord.
- The length of time that a homeless applicant has been in unsuitable temporary housing and has been waiting for suitable temporary accommodation and the difficulties that the homeless applicant is experiencing in their current accommodation.
- The areas of choice of each homeless applicant and the availability of accommodation close to those areas of choice.

6.4.3 Allocations of Extra Care Housing

6.4.3.1 Allocations of extra-care housing will normally be managed outside of the choice based allocations process due to the vulnerability of Applicants for extra-care schemes and the required partnership working with Hampshire County Council and care and support providers.

6.4.3.2 A separate agreement with Hampshire County Council will be entered into to set out the allocations processes for extra care, so the paragraphs below only summarise the broad principles.

6.4.3.3 Extra-care housing will be advertised on the website but on a non-specific basis to ensure awareness of the availability of the extra-care accommodation.

6.4.3.4 The Housing Options team will assess housing needs in accordance with the Scheme. An Extra-Care Assessment and Allocation Panel (ECAP) will assess support and care needs.

6.4.3.5 For each vacancy the ECAP will determine whether it is a vacancy for an Applicant with high, medium or low care needs. This decision will depend on an understanding of the profile of the Applicant within the extra care scheme (to ensure a balanced extra care scheme) and the details of the particular vacancy (for example, a fully adapted property may suggest higher care needs).

6.4.3.6 Each vacancy will be allocated to the most suitable Applicant. When allocating, the following principles will apply:

- A vacancy of a high/medium or low care need will normally be offered to the Applicant with the equivalent level of care who is top on the list for that particular level need.
- Other factors may be taken into consideration as well as the level of housing need. These will include the needs and preferences of individuals (eg wheelchair needs, preferences for floor level and scheme preferences etc).
- In line with the Scheme, normally, Applicants will need to satisfy the local connection criteria.
- If there is a double flat, consideration will be given to giving preference to couples.
- Where there are no suitable Applicants, consideration will be given to Applicants with a different level of assessed care need for the vacancy, if appropriate.
- Where it is still not possible to allocate a vacancy, the vacancy may be individually advertised on the website as a vacancy of older persons' housing within an extra care scheme and allocated by the Housing Options team in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme.

6.4.4 Hard to Let

6.4.4.1 Hard to let properties are those which the Council finds difficult to let due to low demand. The Council may allocate such properties by making a direct offer or

allowing Applicants who would not ordinarily meet the properties labelling criteria to bid on the property.

PART 3: SCHEME ADMINISTRATION

7. MANAGING THE SCHEME

7.1 DECISION MAKING

7.1.1 The following decisions will be the responsibility of the named positions (or positions at an equivalent or higher level) within the Council; the list is not exhaustive and a Senior Officer has the discretion to delegate the decision-making responsibility of any decision to another position as may be deemed appropriate by the Senior Officer:

DECISIONS	POSITION
Eligibility of Applicants	Allocations Assistant/Allocations Officer
Qualifying Applicants (including Local Connection)	Allocations Assistant/Allocations Officer
Household and Bedroom Need Assessment	Allocations Assistant/Allocations Officer
Housing Need Assessment (Banding decision)	Allocations Assistant/Allocations Officer
Renewal Request/Change of Circumstance–re- assessment	Allocations Assistant/Allocations Officer
Lowering an Applicant’s Band, Suspension or Removal from the Register	Allocations Officer
Prioritisation of Applications and successful bids	Allocations Officer
Properties excluded from Choice Based Process	Allocations Officer
Adverts for properties: including labelling, setting preferences and property description	Allocations Officer
Reviews	Allocations Manager
Banding for Vulnerable Occupant or selection of an Applicant for Auto-Bidding	Allocations Manager
Health and Wellbeing Assessment	Allocations Manager (following assessment by the Medical and Welfare Panel)
Decision on community contribution issues (including Incentive to Work and Rural Connection Band)	Senior Officer
Exercise of discretion ⁴	Senior Officer
Rural Connection Band	Senior Officer
Management moves or direct offers	Senior Officer
Local Lettings Plans and Sensitive Lettings	Senior Officers (in consultation Portfolio Holder for Housing)
Decision on key-worker status ⁵	Senior Officers (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing)

⁴ Including in relation to whether exceptional circumstances apply for failure to complete a Renewal Request within 3 months.

⁵ Including qualification for Band 3

7.2 MEDICAL AND WELFARE PANEL

7.2.1 Decisions relating an Applicant's health and wellbeing will be made by the Allocation's Manager following the assessment of the Applicant's health and wellbeing by the Medical and Welfare Panel.

7.2.2 The Medical and Welfare Panel will meet as required, but normally at intervals of no less than fortnightly. It will be quorate with two or more officers present. The Medical and Welfare Panel is for professionals only and Applicants may not attend.

7.2.3 The Medical and Welfare Panel will be chaired by the Allocation's Manager and other members of the Medical and Welfare Panel may be:

- Allocations Officer;
- Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer;
- Housing Assistants;
- Tenancy Management Officers or Tenancy Management Assistants;
- Representatives from Social or Children's Services;
- An Occupational therapist;
- Support Workers;
- Representatives from the Locality Mental Health Teams;
- Other professionals

7.2.4 In assessing an Applicant's health and wellbeing need the Medical and Welfare Panel will have particular regard to the matters set out in Appendix 4: Health and Wellbeing Assessment on page 52. Where necessary the Medical and Welfare Panel may seek medical advice.

7.2.5 Medical and Welfare Panel members should not be involved in decisions they are presenting or in which they have a declared interest.

7.2.6 The Medical and Welfare Panel may make decisions setting the limits and parameters of the properties that the Applicant can bid for; including bedroom entitlement, property type and property location.

7.2.7 Applicants will be notified of the decision of the Medical and Welfare Panel after the panel meeting. An Applicant who is not happy with the decision of the Health and Wellbeing Panel will be notified of their right to request a review. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 for further details of the reviews process.

7.3 UPDATING APPLICATION DETAILS

7.3.1 Rolling Reviews

7.3.1.1 A rolling review of Applications will take place so that the Register is kept up to date. Each Application will be reviewed on the anniversary of the Band Start Date; although the Council may review Applications at different intervals if there is a reason

to do so. An Applicant will be asked to complete a Renewal Request. If the Applicant fails to respond to the Renewal Request within 28 days of it being sent, the Application will be suspended. If no contact is made within 3 months of the Renewal Request being sent, the Application will be removed from the Register. An Applicant who has had their Application removed will be notified and will be advised of their right to request a review. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 for further details of the reviews process.

7.3.1.2 If an Applicant has not responded to a Renewal Request within 28 days, but has done so within 3 months, the Application will be reinstated with the original Band Start Date. Applicants who respond after 3 months will only be reinstated with the original Band Start Date if exceptional circumstances apply. Whilst each case will be determined on its individual facts, exceptional circumstances will apply if there is evidence of incapacity (physical or mental) for the period of delay which resulted in the failure to complete the renewal request within the 3 month deadline. A decision as to whether exceptional circumstances apply is reserved to a Senior Officer.

7.3.1.3 If no exceptional circumstances apply, where an Applicant responds to a Renewal Request after having already been removed from the Register for failure to respond, they will have to re-apply to join the Register and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (a) above.

7.3.1.4 Where an Applicant's circumstances are found to have changed during the rolling review process, their Application will be suspended to allow for re-assessment of their Application. An Applicant who has had their Application suspended will be notified and will be advised of their right to request a review. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 for further details of the reviews process.

7.3.2 Change of Circumstance

7.3.2.1 Applicants must inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances as soon as possible after they occur. This includes any change that may affect the Band that has been given to their Application.

7.3.2.2 Applicants have the right to request that their Application be reconsidered following a change in their circumstance. An Application will be re-assessed and given a Band Start Date as set out at paragraph 5.4.1 (b) above.

7.3.2.3 If a person successfully bids for a vacancy and it is later found that the Applicant's housing situation is different from the details provided when they made their Application, the offer will be withdrawn. Please see paragraph 6.2.3 Verification of Applications.

7.4 SUSPENSION AND REMOVAL

7.4.1 Suspension

7.4.1.1 An Application may be suspended from the Register in the following circumstances:

Where the:

- Applicant has failed to bid on any properties within a 12 month period;
- Applicant has refused 2 offers (automatic bid, direct offer or successful bid) of accommodation in a 12 month period where the offers have been deemed suitable following review, or where no review was lodged. This includes Applicants who are treated as having refused an offer because they failed to respond;
- Applicant is owed a homeless duty and refuses a suitable offer of accommodation made in discharge of duty owed;
- Council becomes aware of a change of circumstance which requires re-assessment of the Application;
- Applicant has failed to complete a Renewal Request within 28 days of it being sent out;
- Council receives information that the Applicant is no longer eligible or qualifying to be on the Register;
- Council receives information that the Applicant has provided false, or withheld, information.

7.4.1.2 Period of Suspension

REASON FOR SUSPENSION	PERIOD OF SUSPENSION
Refusing 2 suitable offers of accommodation in a 12 month period, or homeless Applicant who refuses a suitable offer of accommodation resulting in discharge of duty.	6 months
Failure to bid in a 12 months period	6 months
Failure to complete a Renewal Request within 28 days	Until the Renewal Request is completed or 3 months; whichever is earlier
The Council becomes aware or is notified of a change of circumstance	Pending re-assessment
The Council becomes aware of, or is notified that: The Applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is no longer qualifying or eligible; or • has provided false information or has withheld information 	Pending investigations

7.4.1.3 If an Applicant who has been suspended for refusing offers of accommodation or failing to bid, wants to remain on the Register after the period of suspension, their Application will be re-instated with the same Band Start Date; unless there has been a change in circumstance in which case the Application will be re-assessed and will

be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above. If following re-instatement, the Application is suspended again within a 12 month period, the Application will be removed from the Register.

7.4.1.4 Where an Application is suspended pending a re-assessment following a change in circumstance, the Application will be re-instated once the re-assessment has been completed. The Application will be given a Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (b) above. If following re-assessment the Applicant is found to no longer be qualifying or eligible, their Application will be removed from the Register.

7.4.1.5 Where an Application was suspended pending investigations of an allegation that the Applicant is no longer qualifying, eligible or has provided false, or has withheld, information, the Application will be re-instated with the original Band Start Date if the allegations are unfounded. The Application will be removed from the Register if the allegations are founded.

7.4.1.6 An Applicant who has had their Application suspended from the Register has the right to request a review. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 below for details of the review process.

7.4.2 Removal

7.4.2.1 An Application will be removed from the Register for the following reasons:

- Where the Applicant requests that their Application be removed;
- Where the Applicant has died;
- Where the Applicant has been rehoused; including where the Applicant has accepted an offer of accommodation and lodged an unsuccessful review of its suitability;
- Where an Applicant has failed to complete a Renewal Request within 3 months of it being sent out;
- If an allegation that an Applicant is no longer eligible, qualifying or has provided false, or has withheld, information is made out (including following the verification stage);
- If following re-instatement from suspension the Application is suspended again within a 12 month period.

7.4.2.2 Where the Council is aware that an Applicant may be vulnerable or suffer from a disability, it may try to contact the Applicant, or where there are appropriate consents or data sharing agreements, any agency that it is aware is working with the Applicant, before removing the Application from the Register.

7.4.2.3 Applicants can apply to re-join the Register at any time. Where an Applicant considers that they have become eligible or qualifying since being removed from the Register, they may also reapply to join the Register, but must provide evidence of a change of circumstance. Applicants who apply to re-join the Register will be treated

as new Applicants and will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (a) above.

7.4.2.4 An Applicant who has had their Application removed from the Register has the right to request a review. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 below for details of the review process.

7.5 RIGHT TO REQUEST A REVIEW

7.5.1 An Applicant has the right to request a review of any decision about the facts of their case which is likely, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing to them; and in particular any of the following decisions:

- Whether the Applicant is eligible or qualifying (including following the verification stage);
- The Scheme Band in which their Application has been placed;
- Their Rural Connection Band;
- The Band Start Date given to their Application;
- Their Bedroom Need Assessment;
- Decision of the Medical and Welfare Panel;
- The suitability of an offer of accommodation (whether direct let, autobid or from a successful bid);
- Their Application being moved to a lower Band;
- Suspending their Application;
- Removing their Application from the Register.

7.5.2 Once an Applicant has been notified in writing of any of the above decisions they will have 21 days from the date of the decision to request a review. The review must be in writing and needs to include full details of why the Applicant does not agree with the decision made. Where appropriate the Applicant should provide evidence to support the review request.

7.5.3 Reviews should be sent by email to housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk or by post to:

Allocations – Review
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

7.5.4 The Council will acknowledge a review within 10 working days. The Allocation Manager, or where necessary a Senior Officer, who did not take part in making the decision, will carry out a review of the case. A response in writing will be provided within 56 days of receipt of the review request. The response will set out the outcome of the review request and the reasons.

7.5.5 An Applicant who needs support in making their review request can contact the Council at housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk. Where the Council is aware that an Applicant is vulnerable or has disability issues, it will try to make direct contact with the Applicant, or if appropriate consents or data sharing agreements are in place, the agency providing support to the Applicant to ensure that the Applicant is aware that they have the right to request a review of the decision made. Where necessary, a vulnerable or disabled Applicant will be afforded alternative means of making their review.

7.6 EXERCISE OF DISCRETION

7.6.1 In exceptional circumstances, so as not to fetter its discretion, the Council reserves the right to depart from any aspect of the Scheme; including but not limited to: qualification criteria, Bedroom Need Assessment, Household membership or the allocation of a vacancy. Any decision to depart from the Scheme will be taken by the Officer in the appropriate position as set out at paragraph 7.1 above.

7.6.2 The Council will exercise its discretion specifically in circumstances where it is necessary to ensure compliance with duties that are imposed on it by other statutes; including but not limited to the Equality Act 2010, or guidance issued by the Secretary of State, including but not limited to Applicants who have fled Domestic Abuse. The exercise of discretion will be monitored to ensure that it is properly exercised within extremely limited boundaries.

7.6.3 When exercising discretion the Council will always consider the circumstances of the Applicant against the prevailing housing conditions within its district.

7.7 EQUALITY AND FAIR ALLOCATIONS

7.7.1 The Council is subject to the general public sector equality duty as set out at s.149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council and its partner landlords are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all individuals who apply for housing. Monitoring of Applications and allocations may take place to ensure that everyone is being treated fairly.

7.7.2 All Applicants may be asked to provide details of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation. This is to allow the Council to monitor who is applying and being allocated housing and to ensure that properties are being offered and allocated fairly.

7.8 CHANGES TO THE SCHEME

7.8.1 The Scheme will be reviewed every two years and will be amended, if necessary. Minor changes will be agreed by Senior Officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing. This will assist in ensuring that the Scheme continues to meet legislative and best practice requirements as well as ensuring the effective use of the

social housing within the Council's district. Before adopting any changes to the Scheme that relate to a major change of policy, the Council will comply with the procedures as set out in the Act

7.9 RIGHT TO INFORMATION

7.9.1 Applicants have the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess:

- How their Application will be treated under the Scheme (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a person who will be given reasonable preference); and
- Whether housing accommodation appropriate for their needs is likely to be made available to them, and if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available for allocation to them.

Where appropriate the Council will publish such information on its website.

7.9.2 Applicants have the right to ask the Council to inform them of any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to them.

7.10 FALSE STATEMENTS OR WITHOLDING INFORMATION

7.10.1 Applicants who knowingly or recklessly make a statement which is false, or knowingly withhold information in connection with their Application, are guilty of a criminal offence. Anyone who is found to have committed such an offence may:

- Have their Application refused or removed from the Register;
- Have an offer of accommodation withdrawn; and/or
- Be prosecuted by the Council. This could lead to a large fine or imprisonment, and may also lead to legal action for the possession of any accommodation found to have been obtained following false information having been given.

7.11 DATA PROTECTION

7.11.2 In accordance with the Council's statutory obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations, all Applicants will be made aware of how their personal information will be processed. Information recorded on the Council's system and on the Applicant's file will be shared with partner landlords and other agencies as necessary. Consent from the Applicant for information sharing will be sought in all cases. For a copy of the Council's Housing Services Privacy Notice please visit: <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/18331/Housing-Services-privacy-notice>

7.11.3 Applicants have a right to see what information is kept about them on written records (please note that a fee may be charged). As far as possible, the Council will make this available subject to certain restrictions. Applicants wishing to view their records should contact the Council at:

Housing Options
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

7.12 CONTACTING HOUSING OPTIONS

- Telephone: 0203 8028 5588
- Email: housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk
- Website: <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/17971/Waiting-list-and-applying-for-housing>
- Postal Address:

Housing Options
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

Applicant: A person who has applied to join, or who is waiting for an allocation of housing, from the Council's housing register. Generally, the term should also be read to refer to all members of the Applicant's Household.

Application: An application to join, or to be allocated housing, from the Council's housing register.

Assisted Bidding: where the Housing Options team has assessed that an Applicant needs assistance to bid on vacancies.

Band: One of the four bands used to prioritise Applicants on the Council's housing register.

Bedroom Need: the number of bedrooms that an Applicant is entitled to; having regard to the Applicant's Household make-up (see paragraph 5.3).

Domestic Abuse: (Is not limited to physical violence and is not confined to incidents in the home) It relates to physical violence, abuse or patterns of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender.

Employment: is work where an Applicant or member of their Household holds a contract (written or oral) which gives them a remuneration for the work undertaken that is declared for tax purposes, or self-employment which generates a source of income for an Applicant which is declared for tax purposes. In establishing whether an Applicant is in employment, evidence may be required including a written contract, tax return, letter from the employer, payslips or a statement from an accountant.

Full Housing Duty: the duty owed to a homeless applicant who the Council accepts is eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (for post 3 April 2018 applies only after the Relief Duty has expired).

Homeless Applicant: an Applicant (on the housing register) who the Council accepts is statutory homeless and is owed a duty under Part VII of the Act.

Homesearch Allocation Scheme 2: the allocation scheme that was adopted by the Council in 2012 and which was in operation up until the adoption of the Scheme.

Household: The individuals that an Applicant is expected to reside with and who an Applicant can include in their housing application (see paragraph 5.2).

Housing Need: The assessed level of need which determines which of the Scheme's Bands an Application will be placed (see paragraph 5.1).

Partner: the spouse or civil partner of an Applicant; including a cohabitant who is living with the Applicant as a spouse or civil partner.

Prevention Duty: the duty owed (for a minimum period of 56 days) to those who the Council accepts are eligible and threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

Private Rented Sector Offer: an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy in discharge of a duty owed under Part VII of the Act.

Register: The Council's housing register which contains the list of all those who have applied to the Council for social housing.

Relief Duty: the duty owed (for a minimum period of 56 days) to those who the Council accepts are eligible and homeless.

Renewal Request: the request sent by the Council to Applicants, normally on the anniversary of their Band Start Date, asking for updated details of their circumstances (see paragraph 7.3.1.)

Restricted Person: A person who is subject to immigration control and who is not eligible for an allocation of housing because they do not have leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom or have leave that is subject to a "no recourse to public funds" condition.

Regular Forces: the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force.

Reserve Forces: the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Regular Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Senior Officer (s): The Housing Options Service Manager or any other officer of an equivalent or higher position.

Transfer Applicant: an Applicant who is already accommodated in social housing but who has a Housing Need and has applied for an allocation of alternative social housing.

Vulnerable Occupant: an occupant of Council accommodation left following the death of, or the departure of, a Council tenant, but who has no legal rights to remain and where the Council has deemed the occupier vulnerable due to their personal circumstances. An Applicant will be deemed vulnerable if they have a disability or other health (physical or mental) issues that make them unable to secure and/or sustain alternative accommodation in the private sector or who the Council would have a duty to secure permanent accommodation under s.193(2) of the Act if they were evicted and who, due to their Household circumstances, a Private Rented Sector Offer discharge would not be available. In assessing whether a person can secure and sustain a private sector tenancy, the Council will have regard to any support or assistance that can be given to the person to facilitate their ability to do so. Such occupants may be occupiers with no succession rights or tenants whose joint tenancy has been terminated by the other tenant but who remains in occupation. The Council will always assess the occupant's circumstances against the prevailing housing conditions within its district.

APPENDIX 2: ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

(A) Eligibility

1. The Council is not able to make an allocation of property to anyone who has been classed as a Restricted Person by the government. The Council is not able make an allocation to the following:
 - i. A person from abroad who is subject to immigration control unless s/he is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, or is currently a tenant of the Council or a private registered provider of social housing or a registered social landlord;
 - ii. Two or more people jointly if any one of them falls within the above category of people; or
 - iii. Other classes of persons from abroad specified by the Secretary of State.
2. The Council will disregard any Restricted Person when assessing whether an Applicant falls into the Reasonable Preference Group.
3. Most persons from abroad who are not subject to immigration control (including British Citizens) must also be *habitually resident* in the Common Travel Area and/or have the right to reside in the Common Travel Area in order to be eligible to join the Register. This is known as the habitual residence test. The Common Travel Area consists of:
 - i. United Kingdom;
 - ii. The Channel Islands;
 - iii. The Isle of Man; and
 - iv. The Republic of Ireland
4. In order to pass the habitual residence test the Council will need to be satisfied that an Applicant is ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the test normally looks at whether someone has been in the United Kingdom for an appreciable period of time and whether they have a settled intention to remain. Some British Citizens who are returning from a period abroad will only have to show that they are returning with a settled intention to remain in the United Kingdom.

(B) Local Connection

1. Local connection will be established by:
 - i. Residence:
 - o An Applicant or their Partner has been resident in the Council's district for a continuous period of 2 years at the time of the Application; or

- An Applicant has resided in the Council's district area for 10 years or more in the past;
- Applicants who fall within one of the groups below will be exempt from having to satisfy the local connection criteria:
 - Those owed a s.193(2) and s.189B(2) duty by the Council under Part VII of the Act;
 - A person the Council is required by law to exempt from having to satisfy the local connection criteria, including the following:
 - Anyone who the Council is satisfied meets the criteria for a Right to Move as set out at paragraph 3(e) of Appendix 3: Scheme Bands at page 49.
 - Anyone who is serving in the Regular Forces or who has served in the Regular Forces within 5 years of the date of making their Application to join the Scheme;
 - Anyone who has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where:
 - The spouse or civil partner served in the Regular Forces; and
 - Their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
 - Anyone serving or who has served in the Reserve Forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service
 - A "looked after child" as defined by Children's Services in another region and as approved by a Senior Officer; or
 - An Applicant who satisfies a Rural Connection Band.

or

ii. Employment:

An Applicant or their Partner has been employed (whether it is for a fixed or permanent term or it is self-employment) for a period of at least 5 years within the Council's district.

2. As part of the Council's verification process, Applicants will be required to submit documentary evidence to support local connection.

(C) Financial Assessment

1. All Applicants seeking to join the Register will be subject to a financial assessment. Only Applicants who have been assessed as lacking the income and/or assets to resolve their housing need will qualify to join the Register.

2. For Applicants who have an assessed extra care need who are seeking to join the Register, each case will be assessed on its own merits; however such an Applicant will be assessed as being able to resolve their own housing need if their level of income and/or assets enables them to secure, or make arrangements to secure, accommodation/support that would meet their assessed care needs (including in privately funded accommodation).
3. For all other Applicants, each case will be assessed on its own merits; however, an Applicant will be assessed as having the income and/or assets to enable them to resolve their own housing need if the level of income/assets which they have enables them to purchase a property on the open market.
4. In assessing whether an Applicant will be able to purchase a property on the open market, the following additional factors will be taken into consideration:
 - a. The likely ability of the Applicants to qualify for and sustain a mortgage; consideration will be given to:
 - i. The Applicant's age
 - ii. The Applicant's credit rating;
 - iii. Whether the Applicant has savings of at least the deposit needed for a property that meets their Household's needs;
 - iv. Whether their income is at a level to enable them to qualify for a mortgage.
 - b. The property type needed for the Applicant and their Household;
 - c. Whether assets can be realised within a reasonable period of time.
5. In considering whether an Applicant can afford to purchase a property on the open market, the housing market of the Council's district as a whole will be considered and not only the Applicant's area of choice.
6. In assessing an Applicant's income and assets, the Council will have regard to the Applicants gross income and total assets save for the disregards listed at paragraph 7 below.
7. In assessing whether an Applicant has the income and/or capital assets to resolve their own housing need the following income and capital assets will be ignored:
 - a. Any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces where this is evidenced as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service; and
 - b. The following benefit income:
 - i. Disability Living Allowance,
 - ii. Personal Independence Payments; and
 - iii. Attendance Allowance

(D) Deliberately Worsening Own Circumstances to Qualify onto the Register

1. An Applicant who has deliberately worsened their circumstances to be able to join the Register will be treated as a “non-qualifying” Applicant and will be unable to join the Register.
2. Each case will be determined on its individual facts; however, an Applicant will be deemed to have deliberately worsened their circumstances if they have acted in any of the following ways:

The Applicant has:

- i. moved into accommodation which at the date of moving in was unsuitable for their Household’s needs. In deciding whether the property was unsuitable at the point the Applicant moved in, the Council will take into consideration the property’s condition (including disrepair and overcrowding issues), affordability and its location;
 - ii. voluntarily given up accommodation that it was reasonable for the Applicant and their Household to continue to occupy without first securing suitable alternative accommodation;
 - iii. taken deliberate action to cause accommodation to no longer be reasonable for them and their Household to continue to occupy; for example causing damage to accommodation that results in accommodation becoming a risk to health.
3. In considering whether accommodation was reasonable for the Applicant and their Household to continue to occupy, the Council will take into consideration the guidance of the Secretary of State as set out in Chapter 6 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018

(E) Unacceptable Behaviour Resulting in Being Unsuitable to be a Tenant

1. An Applicant whose unacceptable behaviour makes them unsuitable to be a tenant of the Council will be treated as a “non-qualifying” Applicant and will be unable to join the Register.
2. The Council will assess whether an Applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant because of their, or a member of their Households’ behavioural issues; including anti-social behaviour or poor tenancy management.
3. An Applicant will normally be considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant if:
 - i. They have housing related debts:
 - o rent arrears of at least 8 weeks at their current or former address;

- court costs owed to the Council, or a former landlord, for possession or injunction proceedings that were issued against the Applicant;
- recharges owed to the Council for damage caused to one of the Council's properties, rent deposit payment or rent in advance.

Where an Applicant has made and sustained a repayment plan to settle the debt for a continuous period of 6 months the Applicant will not be treated as unsuitable to be a tenant.

Applicants who can demonstrate that they can manage their tenancies with support from an agency with whom they are engaging will not be treated as unsuitable to be tenants. Applicants will need to demonstrate this by providing supporting evidence from the support agency;

or

ii. Are guilty of Anti-Social Behaviour:

Where the Applicant:

- Has been found to have behaved in an anti-social manner by their current or former landlord, or by the Courts within 2 years of them submitting their Application.

Anti-social behaviour will include any acts that interfere with a landlord's ability to carry out its management functions, nuisance, annoyance, violence against others and using a property for immoral purposes.

4. Each case will be determined on its individual facts and the Council will take into consideration the full circumstances of an Applicant's case when deciding whether an Applicant should be non-qualifying due to their behaviour; including, but not limited to, the reasons for the Applicant's behaviour and/or any steps that the Applicant has taken to address their issues.

APPENDIX 3: SCHEME BANDS

1. Band 1: Emergency Need to Move

Applicants will satisfy the criteria for Band 1 if they need to move on an emergency basis. There are very few cases that are likely to be placed in Band 1.

(a) Management Move:

Where a Senior Officer has assessed an Applicant as having an exceptional need to move to ensure the best management of the Council or other landlord's housing stock. Applicants will be assessed as having an exceptional need to move if their need for housing is so urgent that they should take priority over all other Applicants. Each case will be determined on its own merits; however, the following will be placed in Band 1:

Those:

- Who need to move for community safety, for example re-housing under the Multi-Agency Protection Panel Arrangements (MAPPA) or Witness Protection scheme.
- Whose accommodation is unsuitable for their assessed medical needs and they are being discharged from hospital or who need to go into supported or sheltered housing;
- Major works, where a social housing tenant requires permanent rehousing because major works need to be carried out on their property.
- Are occupying a "high need" property, for example an adapted property where the Applicant no longer has a need for that type of accommodation.
- Where the Council has an urgent need to re-house an Applicant to meet statutory or other time limits, for example flexible tenants whose tenancy is due to expire and who need to be secured re-housing in alternative accommodation, under-occupying successors or Vulnerable Occupants in Council accommodation where the Council is rehousing them.

(b) Urgent health and/or wellbeing: Please refer to: 4: Health and Wellbeing Assessment at page 52.

(c) Emergency Disrepair: Please refer to: Appendix 5: Housing Conditions at page 55.

(d) Violence or Threats of Violence:

Where a Household, including existing social housing tenants, need to move because they are at risk of violence or serious harassment. An Applicant will only be placed in Band 1 for violence or threats of violence where a Senior Officer has assessed there is no other housing available (ie temporary accommodation, Sanctuary scheme, refuge) and where the risk can be managed in the Applicant's current accommodation. Applicants

who are at imminent risk of violence or threats of violence may be referred to the Council's homelessness team for assessment under the Part VII of the Act

A management move will only be made for neighbour problems or issues of anti-social behaviour, if there is a serious risk of physical or psychological harm to the Applicant due to anti-social behaviour. The Applicant will need to provide supporting evidence from appropriate agencies. It will also need to be shown that the landlord, or another appropriate agency, has tried all approaches to prevent such behaviour within their anti-social behaviour policy.

When an Application has been placed in Band 1, the Housing Options team may take decisions on which property is suitable for them to bid for. The Housing Options team may also make bids on behalf of the Applicant or make a direct offer to increase the prospects of the Applicant securing rehousing; please refer to Automatic Bidding at paragraph 6.1.6 and Direct Offers at paragraph 6.3.2.

As Applicants who have been placed in Band 1 are in need of urgent re-housing, their circumstances will be kept under review to ensure that the Applicant is still entitled to Band 1. Applicants who fail to make bids where there has been a vacancy that meets their assessed needs may have their Application moved into a lower Band. The Council will move an Applicant into a lower Band if the Applicant's reasons for failing to bid on a vacancy demonstrates that the Applicant does not have a genuine emergency need for re-housing.

2. Band 2: Serious Need to Move

(a) Accepted Full Housing Duty:

- Where an Applicant has been accepted as being owed the Full Housing Duty under Part VII of the Act and the Council has been assessed that discharge cannot be achieved by a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation.
- The Council will not be able to achieve a Private Rented Sector Offer discharge if the Applicant's circumstances prevent them from being able to secure or sustain a tenancy in the private sector due to vulnerability, property size required, affordability and/or where there is a lack of suitable private rented accommodation available with tenancies of at least 12 months.
- In considering whether a discharge with a Private Rented Sector Offer is achievable the Council will also take into consideration whether the Applicant would be able to sustain a tenancy with appropriate support and/or whether the Applicant's circumstances are likely to change within a reasonable period of time.

(b) Under-Occupying Social Housing by 2 or more bedrooms:

This will include Applicants who have had a change in Household membership or successors to a tenancy.

(c) Severely Overcrowded

- Where, in accordance with the Scheme's Bedroom Need Assessment, an Applicant lacks 2 or more bedrooms given the size of their Household; or
- lacks 1 bedroom but has 2 children who lack a bedroom. This will include a single parent with 2 children where one is over 1 in a 1 bedroom house or a couple with 4 same sex children in a 2 bedroom house.
- Where the Council's has assessed the Household as a Category 1 hazard under the Housing Act 2004 due to overcrowding.

In assessing overcrowding the Council will treat a second lounge or dining room that is situated in the accommodation as a bedroom.

(d) High Health and/or Wellbeing: Please refer to Appendix 4: Health and Wellbeing Assessment at page 52.

(e) High State of Disrepair: Please refer to Appendix 5 Housing Conditions at page 55.

(f) Assessed Move On

Where an Applicant is in supported housing within the Council's district area and has been assessed as ready to move on. This will include young people leaving care who have been assessed by Children's Services as ready for independent living.

There is no standard definition of supported accommodation. The Council will determine whether accommodation is to be treated as supported accommodation for the purposes of the Scheme.

Applicants who are not assessed as ready to move on will not qualify for this Band, but may qualify for another Band depending on their Housing Need. Applicants whose supported accommodation is being decommissioned will only have their Application placed in Band 2 if they have been assessed as ready to move on.

As Applicants who have been placed in Band 2 have a serious need for re-housing, their circumstances will be kept under review to ensure that the Applicant is still entitled to Band 2. Applicants who fail to make bids where there has been a vacancy that meets their assessed needs may have their Application moved into a lower Band. The Council will move an Applicant into a lower Band if the Applicant's reasons for failing to bid on a vacancy demonstrates that the Applicant does not have a serious need for re-housing.

3. Band 3: Need to Move

(a) Overcrowded and lack 1 bedroom

Where in accordance with the Scheme's Bedroom Need Assessment, an Applicant lacks 1 bedroom given the size of their Household.

In assessing overcrowding the Council will treat a second lounge or dining room that is situated in the accommodation as a bedroom.

- (b) Applicants that have been assessed as having medium health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances: Please refer to Appendix 4: Health and Wellbeing Assessment at page 52.
- (c) Any serving or former serving members of the Regular Forces, or their spouse or civil partner, stated below will have their Application placed in Band 3:

An Applicant who:

- Is a serving member in the Regular Forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service;
- Is a formerly serving member in the Regular Forces,
- has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of the Applicant's Partner who has served in the Regular Forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
- is serving or has served in the Reserve Forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's services.

Any Applicant who satisfies the criteria listed above and who has an urgent need for rehousing will be given additional priority under the Scheme in Bands 1 or 2 as may be appropriate.

- (d) Applicants that are homeless, to whom the Council owes a Relief or Prevention Duty under Part VII of the Act;
- An Applicant will be owed the Relief duty if the Council is satisfied that they are homeless and eligible for assistance as defined under Part VII of the Act. The duty will last for a minimum of 56 days; thereafter an Applicant whose homelessness has not been relieved will be able to remain in Band 3. However, if an Applicant is found to be owed the Full Housing Duty, they will be moved into Band 2 if a Private Rented Sector Offer discharge cannot be achieved or will remain in Band 3 if it can. An Applicant who is no longer homeless will be removed from the Register.
 - An Applicant will be owed the Prevention Duty if the Council is satisfied that the Applicant is eligible for assistance and is threatened with homelessness within 56 days as defined under Part VII of the Act. If an Applicant's homelessness is not prevented within the 56 days, they may be owed the Relief Duty and will remain in Band 3. If however, their homelessness is prevented; their Application will be removed from the Register.
 - If an Applicant who was owed either the Prevention or Relief Duty ceases to be threatened with homelessness or is no longer homeless, they will be removed

from the Register, unless they have another Housing Need that qualifies them to remain on the Register. If this is the case the Applicant's circumstances will be re-assessed and they will be given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (b) above.

(e) Applicants who need to move under the Right to Move provisions:

This applies to existing social tenants who the Council is satisfied are seeking a transfer from another local authority district in England and who need to move because they:

- work in the Council's district; or
- have been made an offer of work in the Council's district and the Council is satisfied that the Applicant has a genuine intention of taking up the offer of work.

and they would suffer hardship if they were not able to move to the Council's district.

In order to qualify under this heading, the Council must be satisfied that the work is not ancillary to work in another district, voluntary (in that it is undertaken for expenses only or no remuneration at all) or short-term or marginal in nature.

In determining whether an Applicant qualifies under this heading, the Council will take into consideration the following:

i. Hardship:

- The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home;
- The availability and affordability of transport, taking into account levels of earning;
- The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home;
- Other personal circumstances relating to the Applicant including: medical conditions or child care, which would be affected if the Applicant could not move.

ii. Qualifying work:

- Whether the work is regular or intermittent;
- The period of employment (for example a contract that is intended to last for less than 12 months will be considered short term);
- The number of hours worked (less than 16 hours per week will be considered marginal);
- Where the Applicant's main place of work is (if the Applicant main place of work is in a different local authority, even if the pattern of work in the Council's district is regular, the Applicant's work is to be considered ancillary to work in another district.);

(f) Are existing social landlord tenants under-occupying their accommodation by 1 bedroom

This will include Applicants who have had a change in Household membership or successors to a tenancy

(g) Have been assessed as not having a permanent home, or are at risk of becoming homeless and are not owed a duty under Part VII of the Act:

- This will include any Applicant who does not have a permanent address; including those who are staying with friend/relatives where it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation, homeless Applicants that are not owed any duties under Part VII of the Act, those in hostels or occupying accommodation under a licence and Vulnerable Occupants of Council accommodation;
- Applicants occupying temporary accommodation within the Council's stock (other than under s.193(2) of the Act).

(h) Have been accepted as being owed the Full Housing Duty under Part VII of the Act and where it is possible to discharge duty with a Private Rented Sector Offer of accommodation:

This refers to any Applicant who is owed the Full Housing Duty but who has been assessed as being able to secure and sustain a tenancy in the private sector; including in relation to affordability and where there is suitable private sector accommodation available with at least a 12 month tenancy.

(i) Are key workers where the Council identifies that there is a critical need for the key worker to be rehoused to ensure the availability of an essential public service for the Council's community. Decisions as to whether a key-worker should be placed in this Band is reserved to a Senior Officer.

4. Band 4: Lower Need to Move

(a) Where an Applicant has been assessed as having a lower health and/or wellbeing need caused or substantially worsened by their home circumstances; Please refer to Appendix 4: Health and Wellbeing Assessment at page 52.

(b) Where an Applicant has to share essential facilities with other Households or lack essential facilities in their accommodation.

- Essential facilities include: a toilet, bath, shower or kitchen.
- An Applicant's Household will be defined as set out at paragraph 5.2.

This will include Applicants who are lodging or renting a room in a shared house with communal facilities.

(c) Where an Applicant is sharing with relatives or friends and it is reasonable for the Applicant to continue to occupy the accommodation; otherwise they will be placed in Band 3.

In considering whether accommodation is reasonable for the Applicant and their Household to continue to occupy, the Council will take into consideration the guidance of the Secretary of State as set out in Chapter 6 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018.

- (d) Where an Applicant is living in supported accommodation where the Applicant has not been assessed as ready for move on from supported housing in the Council's district area.

There is no standard definition of supported accommodation. The Council will determine whether accommodation is to be treated as supported accommodation for the purposes of the Scheme.

- (j) Applicants that are assured shorthold tenants in the private sector who do not have the financial means to purchase a property. Please refer to Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification on page 40.
- (k) Applicants that have been assessed by the Council under Part VII of the Act as not in priority need or are intentionally homeless and are still statutory homeless at the point of offer.

The Applicant will need to be statutory homeless at the point of any offer being made otherwise their Application will be removed from the Register unless they have another Housing Need that qualifies them to remain on the Register. In which case their Application will be re-assessed and given a new Band Start Date in accordance with paragraph 5.4.1 (b).

APPENDIX 4: HEALTH AND WELLBEING ASSESSMENT

1. An Applicant who needs to move because their health and/or wellbeing is being affected by their home circumstances will need to complete a Health and Wellbeing Assessment form. This can be obtained from the Housing Options team by emailing: housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk.
2. An Applicant will only be assessed as needing to move after the Medical and Welfare Panel has considered their Health and Wellbeing Assessment form and any supporting evidence submitted with it and determined that an Applicant has a need to move on a health and/or wellbeing ground. Please see paragraph 7.2 Medical and Welfare Panel for further details.
3. Health and wellbeing grounds **will not** be awarded in the following circumstances:
 - a. Health problems that are not affected by housing or cannot be improved by housing;
 - b. Housing defects that can be rectified (see also Annex 5: Housing Conditions at page 55);
 - c. Neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour (if the issue cannot be resolved, the Applicant may be eligible for a management move, see paragraph 5.1 and Appendix: 3 Scheme Bands, paragraph 1(a) at page 45).
 - d. Homeless Households who have been provided with temporary accommodation (if an Applicant's temporary accommodation is affecting their health or wellbeing, they should seek a suitability review);
 - e. The disability or health issues of someone who is not a member of the Applicant's Household under the Scheme;
 - f. Time related medical issues (such as pregnancy related problems or a broken leg).
4. An Applicant who has been assessed as having a need to move on health and/or wellbeing grounds, will be placed in one of the 4 Bands (see paragraphs 5.1 above) depending on the assessed level of need. Applicants will normally only be placed in Band 1: Emergency or Band 2: Serious Need to Move if there is supporting evidence from a relevant health professional.
5. Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their health and/or wellbeing assessment, and reasons explaining why the decision was made. If they disagree with the outcome, they have a right of review. Please refer to Request for a Review at 7.5 for the reviews process.
6. Each individual in an Applicant's Household will be assessed if they have a health or wellbeing issue. If more than 1 member of the household is affected by their housing, the Application will be assessed with reference to the Household member with the severest problem. Where an Applicant (or a Household member) has more than 1 health and wellbeing need (for example both mental

and physical), an assessment will be made of whether the combination of these factors should result in the Application being placed in a higher band.

7. When considering whether to place an Applicant into one of the Bands for health and wellbeing, the Medical and Welfare Panel will take into consideration the following factors:

(a) Band 1: Urgent Health or Wellbeing Need

Where the Applicant's accommodation is so unsuitable that should the Applicant remain or return to it the effect on their health would be critical. The only solution would be a move to alternative accommodation in the shortest time possible.

Examples of when an Applicant might be placed in Band 1 include:

- Where there is a significant threat to life;
- Where there is a significant risk of serious and permanent disability;
- Where someone cannot be discharged from hospital because their home is, and will remain permanently impossible to live in;
- Where the Applicant requires essential equipment such as respiratory, which they are prevented from having due to the housing circumstances.

(b) Band 2: High Health or Wellbeing Need

Where the Applicant's accommodation is so unsuitable that it has resulted in the Applicant being completely housebound, at risk of injury, relapse or unable to live independently. Alternative housing is required to prevent serious risks to the Applicant's health and wellbeing. Examples of when an Applicant might be placed in Band 2 include:

- Someone whose housing has rendered them housebound and where they have no support in place;
- Applicants who have escaped Domestic Abuse and who are being accommodated in a refuge or other temporary accommodation whose mental health has deteriorated as a consequence; there will be a need for not only GP but also secondary mental health intervention;
- Where it is impossible for an Applicant to use essential facilities in the home and adaptation is not possible;
- An inability to cope is solely and directly linked to the housing situation and is causing relationship breakdown or the need for secondary mental health intervention.

(c) Band 3: Medium Health or Wellbeing Need

Where the Applicant's accommodation is unsuitable and it is having an unacceptable impact on the Applicant's ability to live independently. Alternative housing is needed to prevent a deterioration in the Applicant's health and wellbeing. Examples of when an Applicant might be placed in Band 3 include:

- Someone who without the support that is in place would be housebound;

- Applicants who have escaped Domestic Abuse and who are being accommodated in a refuge or other temporary accommodation;
- Applicants who are able to access their home but are unable to access essential normal day-to-day facilities within it without significant difficulty, pain or discomfort;
- Applicants who suffer from a mental health issue which is exacerbated by their housing situation; normally there will be a need for not only GP but also secondary mental health intervention.

(d) Band 4: Lower Health and Wellbeing Need

Where the Applicant's housing is unsuitable and is having a negative impact on the Applicant's health and wellbeing but is not causing serious deterioration to their health or ability to live independently. Alternative housing is desirable but not necessary. Examples of when an Applicant might be placed in Band 4 include:

- Mobility issues where the current housing is suitable but the location means the Applicant can access but with some difficulty, public transport and other services;
 - Mental health where the location, environment around the home is a contributory factor. They may have been prescribed medication but are not be in receipt of on-going support from their GP.
8. The above are examples of how assessments will be made and do not form an exhaustive list. A reference to the impact of health or wellbeing on an Applicant should be read as also referring to any member of the Applicant's Household. Each Application will be considered on a case by case basis.
 9. Applicants who need to move to receive support or where a family member/carer needs to move to provide support to them will also be able to apply for a health and/or wellbeing need to move. If a family member/carer needs to move, they will have to join the Register and complete the Health and Wellbeing Assessment form. Their application will be placed in one of the 4 bands depending on the assessed need to move.

APPENDIX 5: HOUSING CONDITION

1. The Council's Home Health and Safety Surveyor, or an Environmental Health Officer may be asked to investigate the defects that are reported by an Applicant where the problem might lead to an award of Band 1 or Band 2 for housing condition.
2. Where housing defects exists Applicants are expected to have already raised the problem with their landlord. This will have given the Applicant's landlord the opportunity to carry out the necessary improvements before involving the Council to take possible enforcement action. Applicants should be made fully aware that if an officer of the Council visits and identifies emergency or high disrepair it will be under an obligation to notify the landlord and where appropriate to take enforcement action under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act).
3. Applicants will be awarded Band 1 or Band 2 depending on the assessment carried out by the Council's Home Health and Safety Surveyor, or if appropriate, Environmental Health Officer following an inspection of the Applicant's property. Applicants will not be placed in Band 1 or Band 2 if remedial action is planned to rectify the issues. In such circumstances, and if it is necessary and appropriate, Applicants may be re-housed temporarily until any works are complete.
4. Applicants will only be placed in Band 1 or Band 2 if the housing condition inspection results in one of the actions stated in the table below being taken and where the Council's Home Health and Safety or Environmental Health Officer states that remedial action is not possible, or if possible, that it cannot be undertaken within a reasonable period of time.
5. In considering whether remedial action is possible within a reasonable period of time, the Council will take into consideration the time scales involved in having to take any enforcement action against a landlord who is failing to co-operate or undertake necessary works.
6. The table below sets out when Emergency and High Disrepair will be awarded:

BAND	HOUSING CONDITION ASSESSMENT
Band 1:Emergency Disrepair	Where the Council's Home Health and Safety Surveyor, or where appropriate, an Environmental Health Officer, determines that the Council should serve a Demolition Order, Prohibition Order, Emergency Prohibition Order or carry out emergency remedial works under the 2004 Act.

BAND	HOUSING CONDITION ASSESSMENT
Band 2: High Disrepair	Where the Council's Home Health and Safety Surveyor, or where appropriate an Environmental Health Officer, has assessed a property as suffering from either a Category 1 or 2 hazard as set out under Part 1 of the 2004 Act and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

7. An Applicant's who has been awarded Emergency or High Disrepair will have their Application periodically reviewed. An Applicant's Emergency or High Disrepair Banding will be removed if the disrepair is rectified. The Applicant's Emergency or High Disrepair Banding will also be removed if the Applicant is preventing the landlord from undertaking necessary works. An Applicant who is found to be behaving in this way may be removed from the Register, as no longer qualifying as they will be deemed to be someone who is deliberately worsening their circumstances to be able to join the Register (please see paragraph 4.5.1 and Appendix 2: Eligibility and Qualification above).
8. Any Applicant who has had their Application removed or placed into a lower Band will be notified and will be able to seek a review of the decision. Please refer to paragraph 7.5 for the reviews process.

APPENDIX 6: ALLOCATION OF GARAGES

1. To be considered for a Council garage, applicants must be 18 years or older and submit an application to the Council on the appropriate form.
2. Garages are normally allocated on a date order basis from when the application form is received; however,
 - Preferences may be given to applicants living in the same street as the void garage.
 - Preference will be given to applicants who do not currently hold a Council garage tenancy over an applicant who already has a tenancy of 2 or more garages.
3. Applicants may not be allocated a garage if the applicant:
 - Owes former or current arrears on a Council property or garage;
 - Owes former or current recharges on a Council property or garage;
 - Owes any other housing related debt (ie court costs);
 - Has previously been evicted or has poor past payment history of a garage tenancy.
4. A review of the garage waiting list will be carried out at least once a year.
5. Succession of a garage may take place depending on a number of factors:
 - Demand in the area;
 - The successor tenant's address;
 - Payment history
6. Charities or non-profitable organisations are able to apply for a garage to be held on a free of charge basis. Only hard-to-let garages may be let free of charge (ie where there are 2 or more garages available to let in the same street and where there are no eligible applicants on the garage waiting list for them).

APPENDIX 7: BRIEF SUMMARY OF STATUTORY PROVISIONS

1. The Act states an allocation of housing takes place when:
 - A person is selected to be a secure or introductory tenant of the Council or is nominated by the Council to be an assured tenant (including assured shorthold) of a private registered provider of social housing in the Council's district; or
 - When there is a transfer of housing accommodation where a Council or a private registered provider of social housing tenant is in a Reasonable Preference Group and the transfer was made on the tenant's Application.

2. The following do not constitute an allocation of housing:
 - A succession under the Housing Act 1985 (including for an introductory succession);
 - An assignment in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 or to an introductory tenant;
 - A mutual exchange in accordance with the Housing Act 1985;
 - A transfer in accordance with s.158 of the Localism Act 2011;
 - A transfer of an existing social housing tenant where the tenant does not fall within the Reasonable Preference Group and the transfer is not instigated by the tenant's application;
 - An introductory tenant becoming a secure tenant.

3. The Act prohibits the Council from allocating housing accommodation other than in accordance with the provisions of its allocations policy.

CREATIVE PEOPLE PLACES APPLICATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development body for arts and culture across England. They have invited this Council to apply to the Creative People Places fund.
- 1.2 This Council is up against 4 other local authorities from the ACE South West region vying for the single award
- 1.3 The central aims of the fund include:
- Communities are *empowered to take the lead* in shaping local cultural provision
 - More people from the identified places of least engagement experience, create and are inspired by arts and culture, and become regularly engaged as audiences or participants
 - The aspiration for excellence is central to the activity we will support – this covers excellence of the process of engaging communities
 - Through these projects, we will demonstrate the power of arts and culture to enrich the lives of individuals and make positive changes in communities
 - Where possible and appropriate, to maximise digital opportunities for cultural engagement and empowering the public

These aims are aligned with the Council's objectives around community engagement and empowerment to contribute to place making.

- 1.4 New Forest District Council is committed to creating better community engagement as it contributes to quality place making, resulting in a better place to live and work and a creating a thriving community. The Council is leading this application as there are benefits to the Council and to its residents from the application and an alignment of desired outcomes against the ACE aims. We recognise the key opportunity to gain financial support and expertise to assist in the delivery of programmes that have a key benefit to our communities. In this case cultural activities would be used to provide wider community outcomes in the same way that other mediums, such as sport and physical activity, are currently used.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to make the Cabinet aware of the bid that has been submitted

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The New Forest can apply for £1.2 million over 4 years
- 2.2 ACE will only invest the money into consortia in eligible places, to develop a programme of cultural activity and engagement. The consortium must include a cultural organisation and have a demonstrable mechanism for community voluntary engagement.

- 2.3 The Core Consortium members will be responsible for developing and leading the programme of activity in each successful place; they are accountable for meeting the Arts Council's aims for the Creative People and Places programme.
- 2.4 The Local Authority cannot be the lead applicant although we have co-ordinated the application.
- 2.5 For the purposes of meeting the application's requirements the Council has constructed a consortium consisting of:
- New Forest District Council: key facilitator of the consortium
 - Energise Me: one of 43 Active Partnerships nationwide, they are funded by Sport England and part of the DCMS strategy. Long-time partners on physical activity delivery they have agreed to act as "the Lead Applicant".
 - Folio: a collaboration of local professional cultural organisations established by this Council to be a collective voice for arts and culture in the district. Members include Forest Arts Centre, Coda, St Barbes, New Forest Museum, Forest Forge, hArt and Spud. Hangar Farm and Eling Tide Mill are expected to join.
 - Community First New Forest: The mandatory community organisation specified in the guidelines for the application. They are the local branch of the national Council for Voluntary Services. This council grant aid the organisation to deliver the services that this application and consortium require.
 - New Forest National Park: Deliverers of the New Forest Arts Festival. Partners in related health and wellbeing projects with experience of monitoring similar funds.

This consortium membership can and will be reviewed as the programme takes shape and the required skill sets are identified to take the programme forward.

- 2.6 The consortium has held a "mandatory conversation" with the Arts Council's Relationship Manager, who was encouraged by the work to date and supportive of proceeding to submission of application. The application was submitted by the deadline on Thursday 21 March
- 2.7 If the consortium is successful in the application we will be invited to an interview and a decision is expected by 7 August 2019
- 2.8 A successful application will deliver activity in 2 phases. Phase 1 will be up to 6 months and will be to allow the consortium to develop programmes of community engagement, develop partnerships, refine the details of the programme of delivery and produce a shared business plan.
- 2.9 Phase 2 is the delivery stage, delivering against the shared objectives that have been identified in phase one.
- 2.10 The Council has engaged and met with a range of potential delivery partners and funders in preparation for the delivery stage. This has identified potential match funding opportunities and identified key skills not available through Folio. The exact project programmes will be shaped though Phase one.

3. The Creative People and Places proposal

- 3.1 The Creative People and Places application and process allows the District Council to engage with our communities and understand the unique character of the different towns and parishes. We are looking to explore the difference in the various

communities, the demographics, the opportunities that exist, the barriers they face and how we can ensure that all our residents have access to a quality environment. The poor links between the various towns within the District and the physical separation has resulted in the development of distinct communities.

- 3.2 This application allows us to use the cultural offer as another vehicle to help us to deliver our wider objectives linked to health and wellbeing, community engagement, community safety and economic development.
- 3.3 The funding can be used to best deliver the programme. Through the initial phase this may indicate that this requires the employment of a coordinator to deliver the project outcomes, creating community groups and building on the community engagement. We are exploring which partner that post would be best located with.
- 3.4 We intend to deliver activity in each of the major population areas around the District, building on existing community structures and developing new ones where necessary. We already have support from a number of local and county organisations to assist with the delivery of the programme. This recognises the difference of each of the local communities.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Creative People and Places scheme is a one-time opportunity for the District Council. Our focus is on growing our community engagement, creating a positive place for a larger section of our residents and improving the quality of life. This fund allows the District Council to achieve its targets and add Arts and Culture to the tools that can effect the positive engagement. This will be delivered in partnership with new and existing partners creating a sustainable model for community engagement and the funding allows for quality delivery.
- 4.2 the Council has constructed a consortium to deliver a successful bid based on the acknowledged skills sets of the various organisations and ability to answer aspects of the application process to the national funding body. Through the consortium we will continue to shape the programme delivery, link with our communities and monitor the outcomes.
- 4.3 If we chose to be the employing body we can directly link the programme manager to the necessary partners and sections to ensure the wider community targets are achieved. New Forest District Council would also be visibly seen as delivering the scheme, rather than as a supporter.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial obligations on the Council.
The project will look for 25% of the total cost of the activity to come from sources other than the Arts Council. This can include:
 - Ticket sales and earned income over the period of the project
 - Cash donations from individuals or companies
 - Grants from other lottery distributors or local grant pots
 - Donation of equipment or materials and in kind contribution.This is the same model currently employed for the delivery of many of our community activity and we are comfortable with delivering projects in this way and believe that the amounts are achievable.

- 5.2 There are possible costs involved in employment if we decide to employ a programme manager, although any post would be fully funded.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Positive. The community engagement element of the project will enable communities to highlight issues that they face and find meaningful ways to communicate these issues.
- 6.2 A wider range of diversionary activities in targeted areas will look to impact on antisocial activity.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The delivery of the programmes will be local and will look at ways to engage the community in local delivery and events. The programme should look at creating a more welcoming environment within the communities

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The project will look to target under-represented groups in the arts and culture and to make the offer more inclusive. The Council will be working with targeted groups identified including those from areas of deprivation, ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and long term conditions.

9. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Managed information through agreed monitoring and evaluation requirements

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' COMMENTS

Community Affairs Portfolio Holder: This is a fantastic opportunity to further engage with our communities and to empower them to create a positive place to live and work with a vibrant cultural environment.

Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder: I fully support the recommendation in this report. We are fortunate in the New Forest of having a vibrant and active cultural / arts voluntary sector which gives so much to our communities. We already work in partnership with these organisations to promote healthy and active lifestyles, tackle isolation in the elderly and promote mental wellbeing across the District. If we are successful in our funding bid we will not have to create a new approach, but build upon the successes we have enjoyed and the partnerships that are already in place. Arts and culture can certainly contribute towards active communities, and the more funding available, the more we can do to promote this work.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 11.1 Acknowledge that, if the bid is successful, this Council will continue to be a member of the Core Consortium, overseeing the project for the next 4 years and shaping the community engagement and related outcomes.; and
- 11.2 Agree that the Council should explore the possibility of being the employing body of a potential project lead officer to oversee the delivery of the programme as part of this Council's community engagement programme.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

Arts Council
National Lottery
Development Funds:
New Creative
People and Places

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CABINET – 3 APRIL 2019

PORTFOLIO: FINANCE, CORPORATE
SERVICES AND IMPROVEMENT / ALL

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (2018/19 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides a provisional outturn on the 2018/19 budget following on from the previous monitoring report to Cabinet in December.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An important element of the Council's financial strategy includes a continuous review of activities and services in order to identify opportunities for savings in expenditure alongside opportunities to generate income. This has been successful in addressing the significant reductions in government funding, whilst at the same time maintaining key service levels. Budget monitoring reports form an important part of this process and support the ongoing development of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 2.2 It is important that this report is reviewed in the context of the MTFP as it includes savings and incomes generated as a result of the Council's need to deliver a balanced budget going forward.

3. GENERAL FUND 2018/19 OUTTURN PROJECTION

- 3.1 A General Fund budget of **£17.243m** for 2018/19 was agreed by Council in February 2018. Net positive variations reported to Cabinet in September and December amounted to **£776k**. These net positive variations, along with rephasing from future years into 2018/19 of **£240k** resulted in a reduced budget requirement for 2018/19 of **£16.707m**.
- 3.2 This report identifies positive budget variations of **£1.418m** and new budget requirements of **£1.299m** (with £102k being funded from earmarked reserves). In addition, the report identifies budgets rephased to later years of **£814k** with the amount returned to reserves. **The latest General Fund estimated outturn for 2018/19 is now updated to £16.561m.** Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the variations and details of the material variations are provided in sections 3.6 to 3.8:

Table 1	Para.	Savings £'000	New Req. £'000	Rephasing £'000	Total £'000
Original Budget April 2018/19					17,243
Variations agreed in September	3.1	-577	102	606	131
Transfer from Reserves in September	3.1	0	0	-606	-606
Variations agreed in December	3.1	-351	50	240	-61
Transfer from Reserves in December	3.1	0	0	0	0
Updated Budget December 2018		-928	152	240	16,707
Portfolio / Committee Items	3.7	-1,392	890	-275	-777
AMG / Asset Replacement	3.8	-26	409	-491	-108
Business Development / Third Party	3.9	0	0	-48	-48
		-1,418	1,299	-814	15,774
Transfer from Reserves			-102		-102
Transfer to Reserves			75	814	889
Provisional Outturn 31-03-19					16,561

- 3.3 When the final yearend position is established, a review of the variations will be undertaken to determine which are on-going and not yet reflected in the 2019/20 budget or forward looking MTFP.
- 3.4 As there is a net positive variation being reported, a contribution of £75k has been allowed for to top up the Local Development Framework reserve, to account for expenditure anticipated during 2019/20.
- 3.5 Outside of the variations as included within paragraph 3.2 and table 1, the Council has successfully appealed against the rateable value on 5 of its car parks. A net refund of £720k will be returned to the Council from the NNDR appeals provision for the period covering 2010/11 - 2017/18. The further financial implications of the refund to 2018/19 and future years have been included within previous financial reporting. The refund will be placed into the capital programme reserve and will be used to support the delivery of the capital and maintenance programmes.
- 3.6 Table 2 confirms the Portfolio variations between expenditure and income. The significant individual variations are then listed in section 3.7:

Table 2	Expenditure Savings £'000	Additional Income £'000	New Requirements £'000	Income Shortfalls £'000
Finance, Corporate Services and Improvement	-213	-180	20	0
Environment & Regulation	-180	-24	38	60
Leisure & Wellbeing	-15	-100	30	35
Housing Services	-80	-103	45	0
Planning & Infrastructure	-140	-250	383	184
Local Economy, Property & Innovation	-20	-57	75	0
Community Affairs	-30	0	0	20
	-678	-714	591	299
		-1,392		890

3.7 SIGNIFICANT PORTFOLIO ITEMS

Savings Total; £1.392m

- £150k – Interest Earnings are forecast to exceed the budget by £150k (F,CS&I).
- £103 – Savings on central corporate budgets have accumulated to an anticipated total of £103k (F,CS&I)
- £90k – ICT software licence expenditure is forecast to be £90k under budget (F,CS&I).
- £90k – Savings have materialised across various operational budgets within Streetscene and Refuse and Recycling, totalling £90k (Env&Reg).
- £85k – additional income received (£35k) and expenditure savings have occurred within Transportation, resulting in an overall saving of £85k (P&I)
- £80k – Net expenditure on the provision of Private Sector Housing is lower than budgeted by £80k (Hsg)
- £55k – Various underspends within Policy and Plans have accumulated during 2018/19 to a total now reported of £55k (P&I)
- £50k – Additional turnover rent is expected from Hythe Marina relating to 2017/18 and 2018/19 (LE,P&I)

New Requirements Total; £890k (of which £102k funded from reserves)

- £164k – Planning Application Income is forecast to be down in 2018/19 against the total budget by £164k (P&I).
- £90k – Local Plan Expenditure in 2018/19, to be met from earmarked reserves, is forecast to total £90k in 2018/19 (P&I).
- £75k – The Cabinet previously approved a payment to the Centre for Social Innovation CIC of £75k in 2018/19, this is now included within this report to reflect this decision within the budget (LE,P&I)
- £60k – A shortfall in Cemeteries income of £60k is forecast in 2018/19 (Env&Reg).
- £50k – A net additional expenditure requirement of £50k is forecast within the Parking Service, reflecting additional maintenance and equipment expenditure, largely offset through an accrual due in the 2018/19 accounts for PCN charges (P&I).

Rephasings; £275k

- £160k – The project to reconfigure the layout and resurface Fordingbridge Car Park commenced during March, but will not complete until early in the new financial year (P & I).
- £115k – rephasing is necessary within the Coastal budgets with works now due to take place early in 2019/20 instead of in late 2018/19 (Env&Reg)

3.8 ASSET MAINTENANCE / REPLACEMENT

Savings; £26k

- £26k – Minor savings across schemes are expected to realise savings of £26k at the yearend.

New Requirements Total; £409k

- £249k – Expenditure has progressed during 2018/19 on the delivery of the ICT work programme, necessitating a budget uplift in 2018/19 of £249k (previously reported as rephasing from 2017/18 but not brought into the 2018/19 budget on earlier Financial Monitoring Reports) (F,CS&I).
- £100k – The capital programme includes the Smarter Working budget. £100k of revenue expenditure is forecast in 2018/19 on the delivery of Smarter Working programme, the budget is therefore to be moved from Capital to Revenue (Leaders / F,CS&I)
- £60k – The Cabinet previously approved additional expenditure in respect of the CCTV and Contact Centre office space reconfiguration; £60k of the approved £90k is expected to be spent in 2018/19, with the remainder falling due in 2019/20 (Comm)

Rephasings; £491k

- £491k – incomplete projects in need of rephasing to future years total £491k;
 - Environment – Public Toilet Replacement £298k
 - Environment – Foreshores £105k
 - Health & Leisure Centres £88k

3.9 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/THIRD PARTY GRANTS

Rephasings; £48k

- £48k - Community Grants of £48k need rephasing into 2019/20 (Marchwood Guides £20k and Sandleheath £28k)

4. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account)

- 4.1 The Capital Programme agreed in February 2018 amounted to £26.225m. Net rephasings into 2019/20 reported in September and December amounted to **£1.095m** resulting in a revised capital budget of **£25.130m**.

4.2 This is now decreased to a revised capital budget of **£23.226m** to reflect net budget adjustments of **£664k** (£670k savings with £1.334m of new requirements) and net rephasings of schemes to future years of **£2.568m**, as outlined in tables 3 and 4:

Table 3	Savings £'000	New Req. £'000	Rephasing £'000	Total £'000
Original Budget April 2018/19				26,225
Previously Reported				
Public Sector Housing	0	0	749	749
Other Services (General Fund)	0	0	-1,844	-1,844
Updated Budget December 2018	0	0	-1,095	25,130
New Variations				
Public Sector Housing (HRA)	-370	970	-1,970	-1,370
Other Services (General Fund)	-300	364	-598	-534
Total New Variations	-670	1,334	-2,568	-1,904
Provisional Outturn 31 March 2019	-670	1,334	-3,663	23,226

Table 4	Savings £'000	New Req. £'000	Rephasing £'000
S106 Acquisitions - Crow Lane Phase 2			-1,200
Stocklands			-770
Other Acquisitions		970	
Property Extensions	-200		
Buyback Programme	-170		
Public Sector Housing (HRA)	-370	970	-1,970
Vehicle & Plant Replacement (expected within Q1 2019/20)			-342
Env - Coast protection			-336
Env - Milford on Sea			-20
Smarter Working - Accommodation			100
Disabled Facilities Grants		300	
ENV – Cemeteries Enhancements		64	
Social Housing Grant	-100		
Private Sector Renewal/Home Repairs	-100		
Smarter Working - ICT (to Revenue, not Capital)	-100		
Other Services (GF)	-300	364	-598

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

5.1 A break-even HRA budget for 2018/19 was agreed in February 2018. The following table summarises the revised position, taking into account the previously reported and new variations (detailed in paragraphs 5.2 – 5.4):

Table 5	Original Budget	Previously Reported Variations	New Variations (Para. 5.2 - 5.5)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income	27,667	0	-70
Revenue Maintenance	4,144	-250	
Supervision & Management	5,391	-32	-100
Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	38	0	
Provision for Bad Debt	150	0	
Capital Financing Costs	8,528	0	
Contribution to Capital	9,416	-815	
	27,667	-1,097	-170

5.2 There are no particular material variations within the £170k now reported, but rather this figure represents an accumulation of smaller sums combined to reach this total.

5.3 In accordance with current policy any underspend in the Housing Revenue Account at the year-end, after ensuring the optimum use of capital and revenue resources available, will be transferred to the Acquisitions and Development Reserve, retaining the current Housing Revenue Account general reserve balance at c£1m.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER / EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Crime & Disorder, Equality & Diversity or Environmental implications arising directly from this report.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

7.1 I am pleased overall that the Council continues to identify net favourable variations within its budgets. It would be easy to adversely comment on the level of project rephasing at this late stage, however I fully support the timing that best suits project delivery, rather than fitting in with fiscal boundaries.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund (para 3.2), Capital (para 4.2) and HRA (para 5.1) for 2018/19.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

Financial Monitoring Report 05-09-18
Financial Monitoring Report 05-12-18
Medium Term Financial Plan 06-02-19

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