

**Portfolio holder decision – Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness – 9 December 2025**

**Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy**

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy outlines NFDC’s approach to facilitating home swaps between eligible social housing tenants moving within and out of the district.</p> <p>It ensures compliance with legal frameworks and aims to provide a fair and transparent mutual exchange process. It supports tenants in finding more suitable housing, addressing under/over-occupation and supports the efficient use of housing stock.</p> <p>The policy supports the Council’s proposed Housing Landlord Strategy 2025 – 2030. Aiming to ensure fair, consistent, and effective tenancy management that maximises the use of council housing for residents’ needs.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<p><b>To adopt the Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy.</b></p> <p><b>Once approved, the policy will be formally published within Council documentation and made publicly available to housing tenants via the Council’s webpages</b></p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Housing Landlord Tenancy Policy was approved in October 2025. It was felt that tenants would be offered a fair and transparent mutual exchange process by creating a new Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange policy.</p> <p>The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy support the Corporate Plan 2024/28 priorities:</p> <p><b>People</b> - Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.</p>

	<p><b>Priority 1:</b> Helping those in our community with the greatest need.</p> <p><b>Priority 2:</b> Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Davies
Strategic Director(s)	Peter Matthew – Interim Strategic Director Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Kirsty M Farmer Service Manager - Housing Resident Services 023 8028 5151 <a href="mailto:Kirstym.farmer@nfdc.gov.uk">Kirstym.farmer@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Sharon Wicks Tenancy Sustainment Manager 023 8028 5222 <a href="mailto:Sharon.wicks@nfdc.gov.uk">Sharon.wicks@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p>

## Introduction and background

1. The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange policy has been separated from the Housing Landlord Tenancy Policy to provide tenants with a transparent mutual exchange process. It provides tenants with all the relevant information that they need to decide if a mutual exchange is right for them and the process on how to proceed.
2. The policy sets out NFDC's approach to mutual exchanges, enabling tenants to swap homes with others across the UK. It aims to promote mutual exchange as a housing solution, improve housing options and mobility, make better use of existing housing stock (e.g. tackling under-occupation) and support tenants needing to move for work, family, or health reasons.
3. Tenants with Secure or Flexible Fixed Term Tenancies (FFTTs) have the legal right to exchange, subject to landlord consent and specific legal grounds for refusal.
4. The process is tenant led, with tenants expected to find their own exchange partner. Once they have found an exchange partner they

submit a mutual exchange application. NFDC carry out a property inspection and issue a report to the tenant on the condition of the property. The Council have 42 days to issue a decision on the mutual exchange.

5. Grounds for refusal are set out in schedule 14 of the Localism Act 2011 and include rent arrears, tenancy breaches, unsuitability of the property and ASB.
6. 33 mutual exchanges have taken place of the last 12 months.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

7. The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy support the Corporate Plan 2024/28 priorities:

**People** - Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

**Priority 1:** Helping those in our community with the greatest need.

**Priority 2:** Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

### **Options appraisal**

8. Option 1 (recommended option) – Support the policy as proposed to ensure full information is available to tenants.
9. Option 2 – The Council continues with limited information on the Mutual Exchange process via the Housing Landlord Tenancy Policy.

### **Consultation undertaken**

10. Consultation has taken place with a wide range of housing officers, including the tenant engagement team, in shaping the policy.
11. The policy has been presented to the Tenant Involvement Group on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025, EMT on 12 August 2025, Cabinet members on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

### **Financial and resource implications**

12. The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy will be delivered within existing resources in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

## **Legal implications**

13. Details of the Mutual Exchange process could have been included in the Housing Landlord Tenancy Policy, but it was felt that having a separate policy allowed for better transparency and detail for the tenants.
14. Housing Act 1985 & Localism Act 2011 - These laws set out the rules for how mutual exchanges work and who is eligible.
15. Regulator of Social Housing - We follow the RSH's Consumer Standards, which help ensure we provide a fair and transparent service.

## **Risk assessment**

16. The delivery of the Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange policy mitigates legal and financial risk to the Council, as well as aiming to reduce risks faced by tenants when deciding if a mutual exchange is right for them.
17. The work of officers is risk assessed in line with health and safety and lone working procedures.

## **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

18. Whilst the report has no direct implications, this may present opportunities to contribute to the Council climate change objectives through alternative working practices.

## **Equalities implications**

19. The proposed policy will improve the Council's tenant's response to the mutual exchange process. It is recognised that tenants will have unique needs and experiences and sets out clearly how the Council will support tenants through the mutual exchange process.
20. We are committed to treating everyone fairly. Our policy respects tenants' rights under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **Crime and disorder implications**

21. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

## **Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications**

22. The collection, retention and deletion of resident's data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data is collected and

maintained in line with the required legislation and shared in accordance with defined and established information sharing protocols and procedures.

### **New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

23. The new approach to ensuring the housing service positively contributes to housing neighbourhoods and may involve increased partnership working with the National Park Authority.

### **Conclusion**

24. The Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange policy outlines NFDC's approach to facilitating home swaps between eligible social housing tenants. It aims to provide a fair and transparent mutual exchange process.

### **Portfolio holder endorsement**

25. I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.

Signed: Cllr Steve Davies

Dated: 9 December 2025

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Housing Landlord Mutual Exchange Policy

#### **Background Papers:**

[Decision - Housing Landlord Tenancy Policy](#)

Date on which notice given of this decision – 9 December 2025  
Last date for call in – 16 December 2025