

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
4 JANUARY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Michael Kelleher, Assistant Director - Housing	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Communities	
Contact Officer(s):	Sarah Scase, Operations Manager – Housing Needs	07920 160502
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ALLOCATIONS POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Michael Kelleher – Assistant Director Housing	Deadline date: 31 st Jan 2022 (Cabinet Meeting)
<p>It is recommended that Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The committee is asked to review and endorse the final draft of the policy along with the summary of responses to the consultation, which concluded on the 22nd November 2021 prior to presentation to Cabinet for onward presentation to Full Council for approval prior to adoption. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 It was agreed following the end of the consultation period that we would come back to committee to update on progress.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the committee the updated Common Housing Allocations Policy following a period of public consultation which was undertaken between 31st August 2021 to 22nd November 2021.

2.2 This report is for Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 – Overview & Scrutiny functions, paragraph No 2 Functions determine by the Council:

- Housing need (including homelessness, housing options and selective licensing)

2.4 *How does this report link to the Corporate Priorities?*

Keep all our communities safe, cohesive and healthy:

Providing affordable, warm, safe and secure housing is the cornerstone of a strong society, and the Common Housing Allocations Policy is one of the vehicles available to the council and its social landlord partners to achieve this.

Whilst this work cuts across the entire Sustainable Community Strategy, it most closely aligns with the priority to achieve strong and supportive communities.

2.5 How does this report link to the Children in care Pledge?

The Housing Allocation policy provides a useful tool in ensuring that children looked after by the Council

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	YES	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	31/1/22
Date for relevant Council meeting if applicable	2/3/22 - Full Council	Date for submission to Government Dept. (<i>Please specify which Government Dept.</i>)	N/A

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Peterborough Homes Allocations Policy was last updated in 2012 with subsequent minor amendments being made since. Although there have not been any major statutory changes, the current policy does not now reflect some significant local developments which have happened since its creation. It is therefore imperative that a new policy is created which is accepted by Registered Providers (RPs) and which reflects Housing as a wholistic preventative service.

A report was brought to committee in November 2020 providing details of proposed changes to this policy and to set out the changes which we intended to consult on. Scrutiny was content for consultation to commence.

Changes in senior leadership and developments in service delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic have slowed progress and changed some direction, but we commenced public consultation on proposed changes to the allocations policy in August 2021 and following its conclusion on the 22 November we are reporting back to committee the views of those who responded and subsequent final proposed changes to the policy for review and scrutiny.

The attached summary of changes document (Appendix 1) details all the proposed changes and a summary of the responses received along with explanations where required. This has informed the final draft of the proposed policy (Appendix 2) which will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council for approval prior to adoption.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 We commenced a 12-week public consultation, which ran from the 31 August 2021 until the 22 November 2021.

An online consultation questionnaire was made available and details of how to access were published on the council's website, social media channels and directly with our partner organisations.

We also held three virtual consultation events for members of the public and our partners.

The consultation period has just concluded, and as well as the feedback received at the virtual events, we received 154 completed questionnaires and some additional comments, which have been captured in the summary of responses document.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that Members will scrutinise the summary of responses and further proposed amendments to the proposed allocations policy following the period of public consultation and

provide appropriate challenge where required.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended regulates the allocation of social rented housing by local authorities.

Local housing authorities are required by s.166A(1) of the act to have an allocation policy for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation.

Local housing authorities must allocate in accordance with the allocation policy (s.166A(14)).

All aspects of the allocation process must be covered in the policy including the people by whom decisions are taken.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Alternative options at this stage are to leave the current policy in place. This is not a viable option as the current policy is not only outdated but it also does not fit with our visions of a Prevention service.

As we are going through both a service re-design and the creation of a new Homeless strategy, it is vital that the allocations policy reflects the direction of the service and the current needs of Peterborough residents. Other alternative options would be to make amendments to the current policy but not the changes that are proposed in this document. We are confident that the proposals suggested meet our aims to –

- Assist those in the highest need
- Let properties in a fair and transparent way
- Support vulnerable households
- Ensure there is a clear way of being reconsidered after a Nonqualifying decision

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 *None*

Legal Implications

9.2 *It is not envisaged that there will be any legal implications.*

Equalities Implications

9.3 *It is not anticipated that there will be any groups who are disproportionately affected by the changes in policy.*

Rural Implications

9.4 *None*

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 It is not envisaged that there are likely to be any impact on the Councils carbon emissions as a result of the changes in policy.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1
- Communities and Local Government Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local authorities in England June 2012
 - Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - The Localism Act 2011

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – 2021 Allocations policy consultation summary of responses
Appendix 2 – 2021 Allocations Policy Draft v.2
Appendix 3 – Current & Proposed Bands