

This report is public	
New Cherwell District Council Allocations Scheme	
Committee	Overview and Scrutiny
Date of Committee	10 September 2024
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing - Councillor Chris Pruden
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	13 June 2024
Report of	Assistant Director, Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To consider the draft Housing Allocations Scheme and make comments for consideration by Executive.

1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and comment on the contents of the new drafted Housing Allocations Scheme and recommend adoption by the Executive.
- 1.2 Recommend to Executive that they receive a summary of the consultation responses and give those consideration.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Allocations Scheme is the Policy that ensures the fair allocation of social housing properties within district and is used for the administration of the waiting list for social housing, which is part of our statutory duties.
- 2.2 The Council reviews its scheme regularly to ensure it remains compliant with legislation and is also still meeting the needs of applicants in the best way
- 2.3 A public and stakeholder consultation is currently taking place on the draft policy. This is due to close on 1 October 2024, ahead of the Executive meeting in December.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no new financial implications outlined in the report as the existing arrangement is captured in the base revenue budget Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 22 May 2024			
Legal	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report or the new scheme. Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services, 28 May 2024			
Risk Management	As it is part of our statutory housing duties, to not review the policy to ensure it is compliant with legislation, is fair and inclusive and is meeting the needs of the District would present a risk. Therefore, a regular review of this policy is prudent as part of mitigating actions for this risk. This and any further risks will be managed through the Service Operational Risk and will be escalated to the Leadership Risk Register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 28 May 2024			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact	x			An Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment has been completed and was presented to the Executive.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			The Allocations Scheme provides a framework of how social housing is allocated within Cherwell. It ensures the prioritisation of certain household circumstances based on what the legislation or on local demand factors. The work of the team and support provided ensures that vulnerable groups are able to access the services of the team.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			Many vulnerable groups assisted by the team and who are accessing the waiting list for housing will have protected characteristics. As part of any application, all protected characteristics that an applicant may have been captured as part of this process. This is primarily for monitoring purposes, but it does allow for adjustments to be made.
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Policy does not relate to delivery of new homes or the quality of existing property
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable

Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Housing that meets your needs			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Public consultation is underway			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of statutory duties, the Council manages the waiting list for social housing and also allocates social housing properties within Cherwell on behalf of Registered Providers of social housing that have housing stock within the district. The Council no longer has a significant stock holding of its own following a transfer of its housing stock to what is now Sanctuary Housing. The waiting list comprises of around 2000 households that have varying degrees of housing need. The prioritisation of this need is set out within the Allocations Scheme.
- 3.2 The Allocations Scheme provides the framework for assessment and prioritisation of housing applicants. The Allocations Scheme just covers allocation of social housing and does not cover temporary accommodation, supported accommodation, Extra Care or Shared Ownership schemes.
- 3.3 The prioritisation and administration of housing applications and applicants is outlined within legislation; however, Council's do have some flexibilities to be able to manage and administer their own schemes and prioritise certain applicant circumstances.
- 3.4 The Allocations Scheme was last reviewed in 2021. It is good practice to regularly review schemes to ensure they are compliant with legislation but also to respond to emerging trends and needs.
- 3.5 Following approval by the Executive on 9 July, the new scheme has commenced public and stakeholder consultation. Following conclusion of the consultation and consideration of comments, a final version will be presented for approval at the Executive.

4. Details

- 4.1 The report and its appendices detail the principal changes that the new draft Allocations Scheme makes to the existing scheme that is currently in operation. This includes a summary table of the main changes and the rationale for the change being made.

4.2 However, below is a brief summary of some of the main changes proposed

- An increase in priority for those who are homeless
- A creation of a banding for survivors of Domestic Abuse.
- A review of the income and savings thresholds, which dictate who may be eligible to join the register
- A change in the way overcrowded households are administered
- Additional preference given to those covered by the Armed Forces Covenant
- To accommodate the changes outlined within the report for the future administration of allocations for Oxford's Unmet Housing Need

4.3 The current consultation that is ongoing has included all the major stakeholders involved in housing and the allocation of property. This includes partners that work for Registered Providers of social housing and statutory agencies, such as health and social care. A summary of the consultation comments and actions taken as a result will accompany the final version of the Allocations Scheme presented at the Executive.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for its statutory and key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound. A periodic review of policies is therefore appropriate. Where appropriate, it is important that consultation is undertaken on new policy to ensure that the views of stakeholders are understood and taken account of.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Not applicable
Subject to Call in	Not applicable
If not, why not subject to call in	Not applicable
Ward(s) Affected	All wards

Document Information

Appendices	
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Appendix 1	New Allocations Scheme – draft for consultation
Appendix 2	New Allocations Scheme - summary of main changes
Appendix 3	Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing
Report Author contact details	richard.smith@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221640