

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>New Housing Allocations Scheme 2025</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee</b>	6 January 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Nick Cotter
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	5 December 2024
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing – Nicola Riley

## Purpose of report

To seek approval for a new Housing Allocations Scheme.

### 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the new Housing Allocations Scheme.

### 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

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
<b>Finance</b>	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, 26 November 2024
<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report or the new scheme. Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services, 27 November 2024
<b>Risk Management</b>	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, 26 November 2024			
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>	x			An Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment is included as an Appendices of the report
<b>A</b> 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>B</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 are captured as part of this process. This is primarily for monitoring purposes, but it does allow for adjustments to be made.
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		x		Policy does not relate to delivery of new homes or the quality of existing property
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		x		Not applicable
<b>Data Impact</b>		x		Not applicable
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		x		Not applicable
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Housing that meets your needs			
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not applicable			
<b>Property</b>	Not applicable			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	The scheme has undergone public and stakeholder consultation, as outlined within the report.			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 As part of its 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 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 the Executive meeting in July 2024, public and stakeholder consultation commenced throughout August and September 2024. This included its discussion at the September meeting of Overview and Scrutiny.

### 4. Details

- 4.1 The report and its appendices detail the principal changes that the new 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 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
- 4.3 Comments that were received as part of the consultation, as well as comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, are summarised within Appendix 4 of the report. Where the policy has been changed as a result of consultation is also outlined within this Appendix.

4.4 There were over 50 responses to the consultation and consultees were positive about the changes that have been proposed.

## 5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not bring forward a new Allocations Scheme. This is rejected as it is important that the Council has Policies that are up to date with legislation and can respond to current challenges.

## 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.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	New Cherwell District Council Allocations Scheme 2025
<b>Appendix 2</b>	New Allocations Scheme – Summary of main changes
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Consultation results and responses to comments made
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
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<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Ian Boll, Corporate Director – Communities
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