

Appendix 4: Cherwell District Council (CDC) Housing Allocation Scheme consultation results summary

Thank you to those who participated in the CDC Housing Allocation Scheme consultation.

Introduction

This consultation was undertaken to help CDC review and revise its Housing Allocation Scheme.

The Council is required to consult key partners and the wider public when revising its Housing Allocation Scheme and afford those persons a reasonable opportunity to comment on any proposed revisions. This includes registered providers of social housing (RPs) with which we have nomination arrangements.

Methodology

The 8-week consultation ran during August and September 2024. The consultation was carried out in the form of an online survey that was available on the Council's website. Press and social media communications were used to promote the survey and encourage responses. Key partner agencies were directly approached to participate, and an online event was held for RPs to hear more about the proposals.

The proposed revisions to the Housing Allocation Scheme were also discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the consultation period.

The survey asked for views on the key proposed revisions to the Housing Allocation Scheme. Respondents were also asked to state if there were any other changes that they would like CDC to consider or if they had any other comments.

Respondents were asked to score the extent to which they agreed with each of the following four proposals:

1. Allowing greater options for survivors of domestic abuse who are at risk but wish to remain in their current home (with safeguards in place).
2. Separating overcrowded households so that those who are more significantly overcrowded than others (such as those who are short of 2-bedrooms rather than 1-bedroom) are given greater priority.
3. Increasing the household savings/assets/income cap from £60,000 to £80,000 for applicants who require 3 or more-bedroom homes.
4. To help encourage existing under-occupiers of social housing to downsize by allowing them to move to a home with fewer bedrooms but retain a spare bedroom.

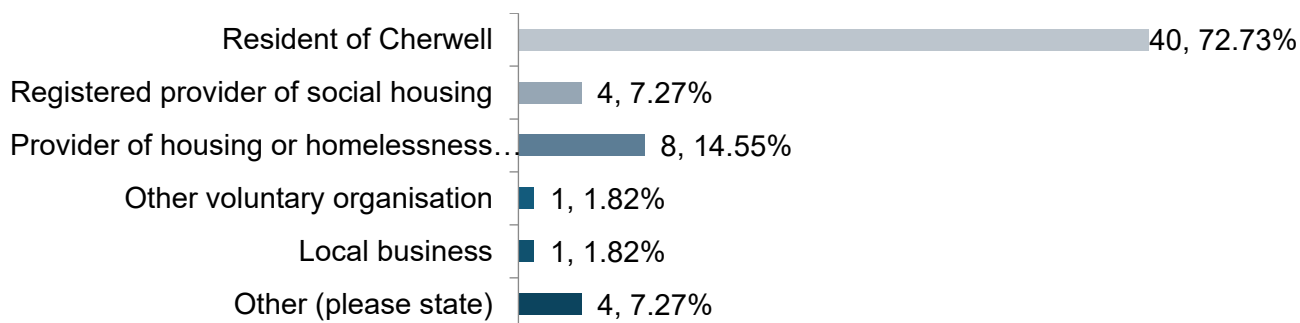
The responses were graded out of 10 and respondents were asked to choose one, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree)

Surveys were anonymised to ensure impartial views were obtained. Documents were made accessible and other ways to participate were made available if and when requested.

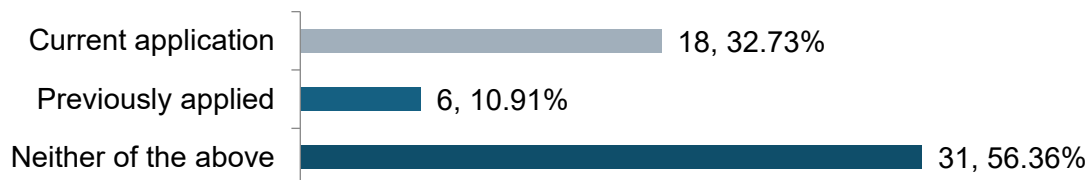
Survey Response and Results

A total of 55 responses were received to the consultation. Thank you, to everyone who took part.

The responses came from a variety of different sources with the majority responding as residents of Cherwell:

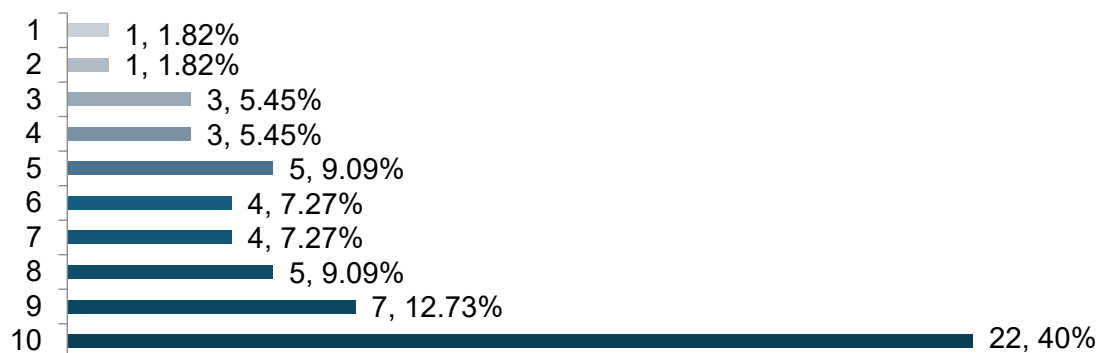


Whilst some respondents had a current housing register application or had previously applied, over half of respondents had not had either:



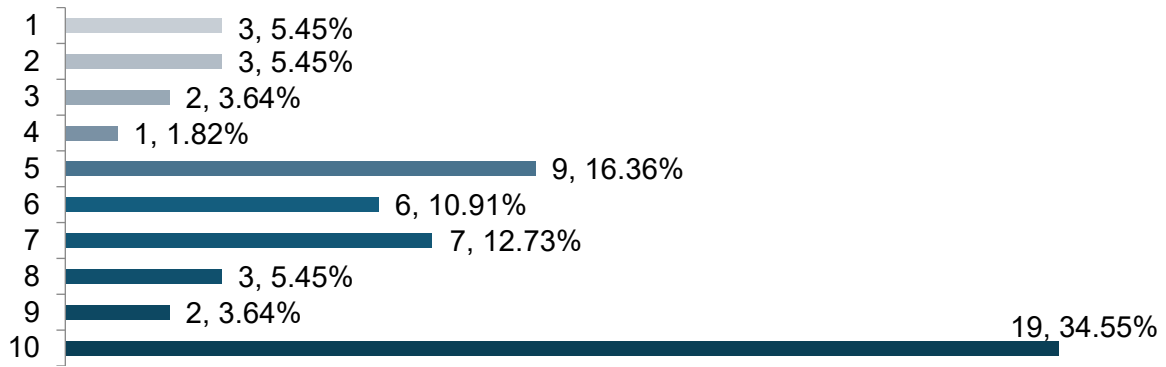
In response to the four proposed revisions to the Housing Allocation Scheme, respondents were broadly supportive. The responses to these are shown in the charts below:

1. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to allow greater options for survivors of domestic abuse who are at risk but wish to remain in their current home (with safeguards in place)?:



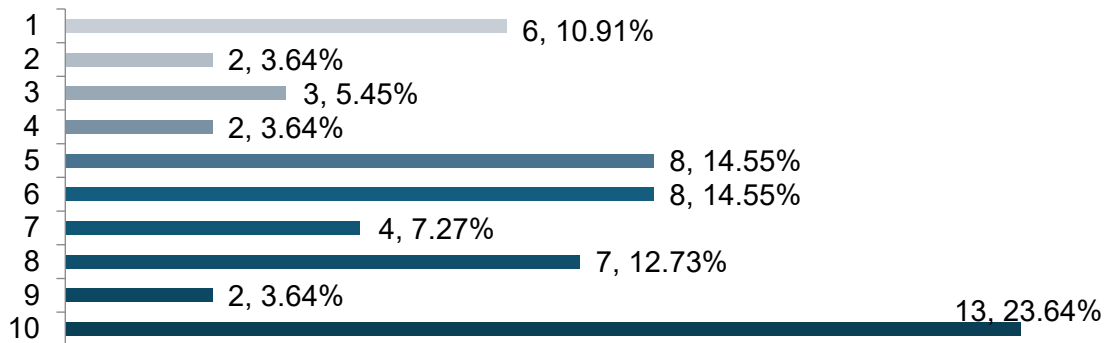
The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals with the largest portion of respondents indicating that they strongly agreed (40%).

2. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to separate overcrowded households so that those who are more significantly overcrowded than others (such as those who are short of 2-bedrooms rather than 1-bedroom) are given greater priority?:



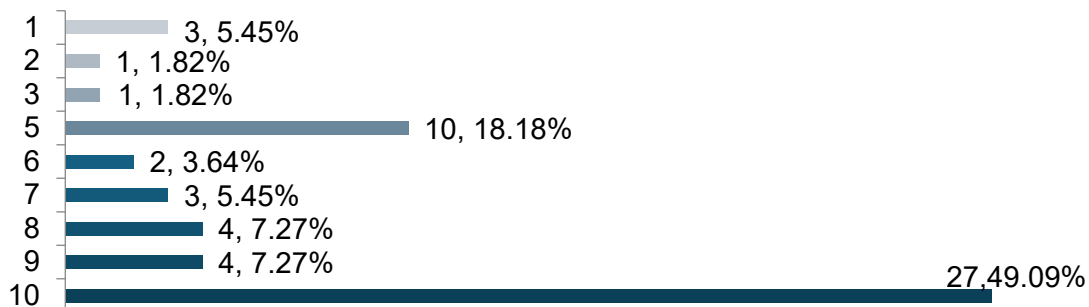
The largest portion of respondents again strongly agreed with the proposals (34.55% giving a maximum score of 10) with some neutral responses (with those scoring 5 or 6 making up 27.27% of responses).

3. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to increase the household assets/income cap from £60,000 to £80,000 for those applicants who require 3 or more-bedroom homes?:



More respondents were positive about this proposal than not; however, many respondents gave a neutral response (with those scoring a 5 or 6 making up 29.1% of responses). Whilst 10% strongly disagreed with the proposal, 23.64 strongly agreed.

4. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to help encourage existing under-occupiers of social housing to downsize by allowing them to move to a home with fewer bedrooms but retain a spare bedroom?:



Respondents were strongly in favour of this proposal with 49.09% of respondents scoring a 10, demonstrating strong support.

How the consultation feedback has helped to shape final proposals

The feedback that the Council has received as part of the consultation has been supportive of the proposed revisions to the Housing Allocation Scheme.

As a result of the responses received above and comments which are summarised on the following pages, the following changes have been made to the final proposals:

- The application of automatic-bidding for applicants who are approved for move-on from supported accommodation has been reviewed, as well as the number of offers of housing these applicants can receive. CDC agree that applying automatic-bidding and allowing only one offer of housing is too restrictive on choice for these applicants. The revised proposal is to retain automatic-bidding to help prevent delays in moving applicants on from the limited supported accommodation schemes available; however, those approved for move-on from supported accommodation will receive 3 offers, in line with other housing register applicants.
- The proposed £80,000 cap on gross household income has been further reviewed.

As part of the consultation process respondents were asked to state if there were any other changes that they would like CDC to consider or if they had any other comments. A summary of these comments is provided below. Where multiple comments have been received that are similar, this is indicated.

Are there any other changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme that you would like to be considered, or do you have any other comments to make?

**Summary of comments made by respondents
(from 51 responses)**

Officer Response

Comment theme: Who should be eligible/qualify

“Not allow people who abuse others to be in social housing”.

Any person who has been convicted of a criminal offence that makes the person unsuitable to be a tenant, including in relation to domestic violence, may be disqualified from the housing register (see Section 4.9).
However, applicants cannot be disqualified from the housing register indefinitely for past behavior. CDC must consider when convictions are spent and must also have regard to our statutory duties and the requirement to give reasonable preference to some categories of applicant.

“If someone is earning £80,000 they can afford private rented or a mortgage they do not need social housing”.

Any person earning £80,000 will not qualify to join the housing register. A lower £60,000 cap will apply to applicants who require 1 or 2-bedroom homes. The calculation takes into account all financial assets (including savings) and combines this with gross household income of all adult household members.

The increased cap for applicants who require 3+ bedroom homes acknowledges the cost to rent larger homes on the open market in Cherwell and is in line with the national eligibility criteria for intermediate affordable housing such as First Homes or Shared Ownership. (see Section 4.9.5)

“People who continue to break the law should not be allowed to register on the housing allocation”.

CDC will disqualify an applicant from the housing register if the applicant, or any member of their household, has behaved in an unacceptable way as described the Housing Allocation Scheme and

	<p>they are still considered by CDC to be unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour. This includes fraud, deception, convictions, anti-social behaviour and breaches of tenancy. (see Section 4.9)</p>
<p>“When homelessness is broached, it is not freely advised that this will include economic immigrants who have entered the UK illegally. These people stay in hotels for 2+years while they wait for approval to remain (therefore reaching the threshold for having a "local connection"). Once given rights to remain, they then become "homeless". I don't think these people should have priority over people already on the housing list. In a world of fairness and equality, I don't think it is fair. The UK is being taken advantage of and it should not be encouraged.”</p>	<p>The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 set out which classes of persons from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation housing, rather than this being set locally by CDC.</p> <p>The proposed Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to applicants who are in more urgent housing need, rather than their country of origin or who has waited the longest.</p> <p>However, applicants who have the same level of priority based on their housing needs will then be prioritised based on the amount of time they have waited on the housing register.</p>
<p>“I do not support the continued apparently preferential arrangements for those seeking asylum in the UK, for instance by the wholesale allocation of the Town Centre House building to this need. Integration, tolerance and support could be improved by provision of housing throughout the CDC estate.”</p>	<p>Where central government funding is secured to deliver housing for specified cohorts, the housing delivered must then be allocated in line with the funding arrangements.</p>
<p>“Any foreign people legal or illegal need to be put at the bottom of any lists. People born in this country should have a right to a place to live before we let anyone else. Army veterans need to be the top priority.”</p>	<p>Army veterans who have urgent housing needs will be further prioritised under the proposals in this revised Housing Allocation Scheme (see Section 4.5).</p> <p>The proposed Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to applicants who are in more urgent housing need, rather than their country of origin.</p>

<p>“Think about our own homeless such as veterans that are living on the street before housing any immigrants”</p>	<p>Army veterans who have urgent housing needs will be further prioritised under the proposals in this revised Housing Allocation Scheme (see Section 4.5).</p>
<p>“Should only be given to British citizens”</p>	<p>The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 set out which classes of persons from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation housing, rather than this being set locally by CDC.</p>
<p>“Allocation of 2 bed properties to joint single homeless applicants is something I would have hoped to see making an appearance, given that single homelessness takes up such a huge proportion for demand on accommodation.”</p>	<p>For many households who are eligible for a 1-bedroom home, a 2-bedroom home would not be affordable, in part due to housing benefit regulations. 2-bedroom homes are in high demand from applicants who need 2-bedroom homes. As of September 2024, 678 households on the CDC housing register require 2-bedrooms.</p>
<p>Comment theme: Who should be prioritised</p>	
<p>“People with young kids who are in need to be put first”</p>	<p>Family sized homes (i.e. homes with 2+ bedrooms) will be allocated to applicants who require this number of bedrooms. This need can arise from younger children, adult children, or other adult household members.</p> <p>The Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to those with more urgent housing needs, rather than giving greater priority to those with younger children who may have less urgent needs.</p>
<p>“Higher priority given to households with teenage children needing their own bedroom. Teenage children need their own space much more than younger children, who can cope with sharing for longer”.</p>	<p>Children who reach the age of 16 will be eligible for their own bedroom if they are sharing with a sibling. Children of the same gender under the age of 16 will be expected to share, in line with benefit regulations. Additional priority will apply when the child reaches the age of 18 if he/she is sharing a bedroom with a sibling. Children of different genders sharing a bedroom will be eligible for their own bedroom and be given greater priority at an earlier stage, when one child reaches the age of 10.</p>

	<p>This is in line with statutory guidance regarding the allocation of social housing. Additionally, see response above.</p>
<p>"Families with disabilities should be given priority."</p>	<p>Families with disabilities who require specific adaptations or a specific type of home (e.g. who have a need for a ground floor home, a level access shower, or a wheelchair accessible home) will receive greater priority for the homes which meet these needs, over those applicants who do not have these needs.</p>
<p>"If a baby is expected they should be treated as having a child already maybe. Moving just after giving birth is hard for particularly single parents"</p>	<p>Applicants who are pregnant will be treated as already having a further child after the 25th week of pregnancy (third trimester). This allows the applicant to be considered as being in need of an additional bedroom for the unborn child (if applicable) prior to the child being born.</p>
<p>"I find it very disappointing that NHS staff are not prioritised too".</p>	<p>The Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to those with more urgent housing needs, rather than giving greater priority to those with specific forms of employment. However, the scheme does give significant priority to key workers who need to move to take-up or sustain a key worker role.</p> <p>Additionally, some homes are advertised to give greater priority to those in work or who are key workers. Key workers in roles across Oxfordshire will qualify to join the CDC housing register rather than only those who work in Cherwell, however, key workers currently make up only a very small portion of all those on the CDC housing register (less than 1%).</p>
<p>"Give to people who work" + 1 similar response</p>	<p>Applicants who work in Cherwell (generally this includes those who work over 16 hours p/week) will qualify to join the housing register whether or not they have any other form of connection with Cherwell. Additionally, see response above. Homes are generally allocated based on need however those in work will be given greater priority for some homes.</p>

<p>“People who have social housing already and are waiting for a larger property should wait longer than those who are living with family/sleeping on sofas”</p>	<p>The Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to those with more urgent housing needs, rather than giving greater priority to those who are not already in social housing.</p> <p>Enabling those already in social housing to move when they need to move to a larger home often means that their current home can then be reallocated to those on the housing register who need it. This benefits all those on the register.</p>
<p>“Assurance that people in step-down from hospital supported accommodation (out of hospital care model for homelessness) are encompassed in Band 1. Step-down is critical part of the bed-base of hospitals as now provides significant route out of hospital for people who are homeless. They need to have priority as if still in hospital as failure to move-on in timely manner will result in others not being discharged from hospital.”</p>	<p>Those in step-down accommodation will continue to be assessed in line with homeless legislation and if owed relief/main duty will now be Band 1 under the revised scheme, rather than Band 2. There may also be cases where a Band 1 under our hospital discharge category would be appropriate, however the result would be the same level of priority.</p> <p>Therefore, the proposed revisions should improve both consistency of outcome and speed for those in step-down accommodation securing housing through our housing register.</p>
<p>“There is a risk that by increasing the priority from Band 2 to Band 1 it will be harder to prevent homelessness from other applicants particularly those in Band 2 or 3 if they see their only realistic chance of getting Band 1 as presenting as homeless. The draft Allocations Scheme states quotas are used for applicants – including the statutory homeless – e.g., 30% to the Homeless List and allows preference to homeless applicants on CBL. An alternative approach could be more advert labelling to the homeless list to ensure this quota is met without increasing priority from Band 2 to 1 and potentially making some homeless prevention work harder.”</p>	<p>Advert labelling to give greater priority to certain categories of applicant (such as homeless applicants) for specific properties only allows a short-term solution to reduce waiting times to secure the individual properties which are labelled. As such, applying greater priority to the whole category is a more sustainable solution. The risk of increased homeless presentations will need to be monitored. Band 1 will only apply to accepted statutory homeless households who are owed a Relief or Main Housing Duty under section 189b or 193(2). Those who are owed a prevention duty or who are found not to be in priority need will remain in Band 2.</p>
<p>“Why are all the Houses always given to the homeless? I think that flats should be given to the homeless because they are cheaper. People with children who do not have a place at home and struggle with fungus during the winter are not considered”.</p>	<p>In the year 2023/24 11% of all housing let through the housing register was let to Homeless applicants. Homeless applicants can express choice over which properties they wish to be considered for however are also subject to “auto-bidding” if all available bids are not placed. This makes Homeless applicants more likely to receive an offer of</p>

	housing which is in lower demand and therefore quicker to secure.
<p>“To support people more with medical needs and to be offered the four beds or three beds quicker not should not be going by activation date</p> <p>When it comes to Mobility also given out disabled houses to people without actually any additional needs were no as people who are on the shortlisting with disabilities and never get put forward for the houses.”</p>	Applicants who have needs for accessible housing due to health issues or disability are given greater priority for accessible homes than applicants who do not require them. This includes 3 and 4-bed homes when they have accessible features such as a stair lift or level access shower.
<p>“Families who want to remain living on a particular estate where they also work and children go to school, should be given higher priority to properties that become available in that area instead of moving new people in and causing over-subscribed schools”.</p>	<p>Applicants may choose to only express an interest (bid) if the homes which are in their chosen location/s. However, some applicants have urgent housing needs and have no preference of location.</p> <p>The Housing Allocation Scheme is framed to give greater priority to those with more urgent housing needs. In some village locations, a portion of homes which are let are allocated with greater priority given to those with a connection to the village.</p> <p>This is because many of the affordable homes built in villages are built to help meet the affordable housing needs of those with connections to those specific villages.</p>
<p>“Take into consideration age of the person applying for Social Housing and their health condition, their housing condition and their payments.”</p>	All of these factors are taken into account when assessments are made to determine if an applicant qualifies to join the housing register and what level of priority is applied.
Comment theme: Supply of affordable housing	
<p>“More adverts for 4 or more beds property for larger family”.</p>	4-bedroom homes are in short supply with only 13 being let through the housing register during 2023/24. However, this Housing Allocation Scheme will only affect who will receive greatest priority for an allocation of the homes available and will not change the supply of homes.

<p>“More 1 bedroomed houses and bungalows being built for older people. Over 60's single people who do not want to live in a tiny flat with younger people who deal drugs etc, speaking from experience”.</p> <p>+ 1 Similar response</p>	<p>Many of the bungalows allocated through the housing register are allocated to those who are over 50, 55 or 60. However whilst the Housing Allocation Scheme will determine who will receive greatest priority for an allocation of the homes available it will not change the supply of homes.</p>
<p>“There are very few one-bedroom places available and almost all of them have a no pets policy so a single person with pets might never get a home”.</p>	<p>Policies and decisions regarding requests for pets are for the landlord of the homes to consider and implement. These decisions will have regard to the suitability of the property for pets including, for example, whether or not there is outside space/gardens.</p>
<p>“We need to work out how to build a lot more social housing to keep up with the demand”.</p>	<p>What is developed within the district and on what land is a matter for the Cherwell District Council Local Plan. It is therefore not within scope of the Allocations Scheme.</p>
<p>Comment theme: Domestic abuse</p>	
<p>“DV changes about time instead of having to move themselves and children deal with the perpetrator”</p>	<p>Support is noted.</p>
<p>“The recognition of the complex nature of DV cases, whilst non-urgent, needing to have a provisioned route that offers more choice and control”.</p>	<p>Support is noted.</p>
<p>“How would victims of domestic abuse be monitored to make sure they did not allow their abuser to move in with them? It is quite well evidenced that victims of domestic abuse end up back with their abuser”.</p>	<p>A move to another area of Cherwell must be agreed with CDC in accordance with a safety plan to acceptably reduce the level of risk. This may mean moving to an area that is away from the perpetrator. Once a move is completed due to domestic abuse, the risk will need to be managed by the applicant in partnership with the police and support workers.</p>
<p>“By awarding band 2 priority to applicants affected by Domestic Abuse who do not wish to make a homeless application and awarding them priority to temporarily stay in their current home with appropriate safeguarding in place will help benefit some applicants/families. When a victim of domestic abuse is balancing whether to keep bidding on CBL</p>	<p>The general support for the proposals is noted.</p> <p>If applicants feel that their risk increases such that they are unsafe or unable to remain in their home they will continue to have the option available of presenting as homeless and being temporarily accommodated in a safer place away from their home, such as a</p>

<p>in Band 2 or to present as homeless and move into TA or a refuge some may feel compelled to approach as homeless if they will be housed more quickly as a statutory homeless household in Band 1.”</p>	<p>women’s refuge. In these cases increased priority will apply.</p>
<p>“Consideration may be given, if not already, to allow exceptions flexibility within the Allocations Scheme so that if an applicant for example is affected by Domestic Abuse due to financial control by a family member that they are not excluded on financial grounds without this being take into consideration or an applicant has rent arrears due to similar reasons and they are a barrier to being made an offer”.</p>	<p>CDC agree that such discretions regarding special circumstances should be in place. Each case will be assessed on its own merits with discretion applied as appropriate.</p>
<p>“To not place People more than 10 miles from there town. re don't house people in Bicester is there supporting network is in Banbury just because they are in desperate need”.</p>	<p>Applicants are able to choose which properties and which locations they would like to express an interest in (by placing bids on available properties). The main exception to this choice is homeless households. Homeless households will generally only receive one offer of suitable housing and “automatic-bidding” will apply to their applications.</p> <p>Offers will be made in accordance with Homelessness legislation and if the offer is considered unsuitable the applicant may appeal the suitability of the offer.</p> <p>However, given the good transport links within the district an offer of housing anywhere within the district in order to resolve homelessness is often deemed suitable unless special circumstances apply to the specific case.</p>
<p>Comment theme: Under-occupiers and downsizing</p>	
<p>“Under-occupiers should be forced to downsize to free up larger houses.”</p>	<p>It would generally be unlawful for a social landlord to evict a tenant who did not wish to move to a different home due to their security of tenure, unless another tenancy arrangement existed with their landlord that allowed reviews.</p> <p>Where under-occupiers wish to seek rehousing, the Allocations</p>

	Scheme enables this through the banding scheme and prioritisation of under occupancy as a criteria.
“Encouraging tenants to downsize should only be voluntary and not forced or mandatory. Often these tenants have built a solid support system around them, spent time and love in a property and shouldn’t be made to move to an area which isolates or is inferior to their current home”.	Under-occupiers of social housing will not be forced to downsize. The proposals are to further incentivise under-occupiers to move rather than force them to do so.
“Incentivising downsizing of social rented homes is a great consideration.”	Support is noted.
“People without accommodation could live in homes of the elderly or infirm as carers. This would provide social integration and also reduce hospital bed blocking etc.”	Occupiers of social housing can let out a room to a lodger with the permission of their landlord if they have a spare bedroom. This would ultimately be the tenant’s decision and this is not within scope of the Housing Allocation Scheme.
“Where an applicant is a successor case needing to move from a 3 or 4 bed house to a smaller home, allowing a degree of under occupation to help facilitate the move may also be beneficial too (if not already included in the scope of the change).”	This is within the proposed revisions.
“Increasing the number of larger family homes becoming available by helping households downsize to downsize will benefit many households – particularly larger families in need including homeless and overcrowded families”.	Support is noted.
“Registered Providers often have Lettings Policies they apply nationally and can sometime be a barrier to downsizers if a tenant will be under occupying a smaller home e.g. a single or couple moving to a 2-bed home. Buy in from the RP to this approach at an early stage locally is helpful and can avoid some potential problems at nominations/offering stages.”	Comment noted.
“Working age tenants on benefits affected by the benefit under occupation charge who will still have a 24% charge applied after they move may need to be provided with advice/help with a DHP for the move to go smoothly – until they are in	This is noted and affordability will need to be considered on an individual basis.

work/reach pension age.”	
Comment Theme: Help for applicants	
“Simplify the bidding for people that English is there second language.”	This is noted and plans will be made to improve this when systems are updated/upgraded.
“Don’t add properties for bidding if the previous tenant has not left”.	<p>Sometimes this is unavoidable as social landlords are encouraged to reduce the time homes are left empty between tenants as much as possible. It is relatively rare for an advertised home to be withdrawn because the previous tenant withdrew their notice.</p> <p>The agreement with social landlords is for homes to be advertised within 4-6 weeks of the estimated tenancy start date.</p>
“More help privately renting, especially for people on low wages and/or bad credit”.	The Housing Allocation Scheme only encompasses the allocation of social housing and therefore this is not within the scope of the policy.
“Review more in-depth who is entitled to which band in a fair way and identify/investigate fraudulent applications”.	Each application is assessed in detail and documents are required to help verify each applicant’s housing circumstances along with desk-based checks. In some cases, home visits are required to help verify each applicant’s circumstances.
Comment theme: Overcrowding	
“The long wait for 3 or 4 bedroom properties in particular tends to mean many families are not moved until some or all of their children are 16+/adults. Many older children (2 teenage boys or 2 teenage girls) will also find it hard to share (as a younger boy and a girl where one is 10+). By treating 2 boys or 2 girls who are sharing where one or both are 16 or 17 there is potential for them to be disadvantaged and wait 2 more years before qualifying for Band 2. Some families may appeal this	<p>Currently the Housing Allocation Scheme groups the vast majority of overcrowded households into one level of priority and therefore the same waiting times apply for applicants who may be more severely overcrowded than another applicant in the same priority band.</p> <p>The proposed revisions seek to separate out those who are more urgently and less urgently overcrowded whilst complying with or being</p>

<p>and/or seek additional priority to move on social and welfare or health and welfare grounds taking up a lot of officer time assessing different evidence provided.”</p>	<p>more generous than statutory guidance. In some cases additional priority may apply for medical and/or social or welfare reasons.</p>
<p>Comment theme: Supported accommodation</p>	
<p>“Note that individuals living in supported accommodation, i.e. such as delivered by the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance, will be awarded band 2. We welcome this and this is in line with the commitments that all local housing authorities in Oxfordshire has made as part of Oxfordshire’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26.”</p>	<p>Support noted.</p>
<p>“Would like to understand the justification behind those in supported accommodation only being able to make 1 refusal whereas others have up to three refusals. We obviously want to encourage people to look carefully at offers and work with them but often there is a clear reason why something isn’t suitable. Simply removing them from the register for a period of time only places more stress on the system and will demotivate immensely.”</p>	<p>CDC have reflected on this comment and reviewed the proposals as a result. The proposal is now for those who are approved for move-on from supported accommodation to be eligible for up to 3 offers of accommodation through the housing register in line with other applicant types. As such, 2 offers of accommodation can be refused if the offers are deemed by the applicant to not suit their needs.</p>
<p>“Auto bidding - how we can make this work best for people living in supported accommodation”.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the application of auto-bidding for those approved for move-on from supported accommodation, along with the above regarding the number of offers these applicants can receive. CDC agree that limiting applicants to both one offer only and auto-bidding is too restrictive on choice. Applicants will therefore receive 3 offers in line with other applicants.</p>
<p>“If people are needed to move between supported accommodation projects for safety reasons etc.. then they should maintain their banding and timeline.”</p>	<p>Housing register applications are assessed based on the housing situation of the applicant which will change if the person moves from one home to another. Where applicants housing situation becomes more, or less urgent, the priority applied to their application may change and the effective date the band applies will also then change. Those moving between supported housing projects should generally remain in the same level of priority and the same effective date should therefore apply.</p>

<p>“Is data available to review the baseline quota's to see if these are good measures to use?</p> <p>I'm not sure how routinely these 3-month reviews happen and whether our supported accommodation teams have an opportunity to feed into them with the resident”.</p>	<p>Yes data is available. 3-month reviews are generally carried out for all Band 1 applicants.</p>
<p>“The approach to rent arrears for applicants in move on accommodation may need to be considered too if flexibility is not already in the Allocations Scheme/protocols regarding this as many of those in the most need”.</p>	<p>Applicants who have made significant efforts to reduce arrears will continue to be considered for a nomination of housing. Personal circumstances regarding arrears will continue to be taken into account on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>Comment theme: Alternative proposals/initiatives</p>	
<p>“Incentive to move out of social housing for those that would like to buy (not Right to Buy/Right to Ascertain). A monetary incentive would help me move, whilst also freeing up a property.”</p>	<p>Whilst this is noted, such an initiative would not form part of the Housing Allocation Scheme.</p>
<p>“An alternative approach could be to set a maximum capital limit at the point of application and then review the applicants circumstances at the point they shortlist for an offer (if they do) and advise they will not be considered for an offer if their combined capital/income is considered sufficient to meet their needs. This would be a similar approach to the rent arrears approach applied in the Allocations Scheme and reduce assessment times/requests for lots of financial evidence at the point of application. If an applicant is awarded priority for time on the Housing Register but only qualifies after a change in their income – e.g. they lose their job (and they already meet another reasonable preference group e.g. they have been overcrowded for 2 years they will have lost this time on the register)”.</p>	<p>Applicants are assessed at point of application and also reviewed at point of nomination for housing which ensure that if circumstances have changed and income/savings have increased, applicants may not qualify for an offer of housing despite qualifying to join at point of application.</p> <p>We assess and verify qualification at point of application in order to both manage expectations, ensure consistency of assessment in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme and ensure that all those with active applications are indeed qualifying applications.</p>
<p>“An incentive to move out of social housing for those that would like to buy (not Right to Buy/Right to Ascertain). A monetary incentive would help me move, whilst also freeing up a property.”</p>	<p>Whilst this is noted, such an initiative is not within scope of the Housing Allocations Scheme.</p>

Comment theme: Other	
<p>“The Allocation schemes should leave room for the exercise of discretion on the part of the local authority to make offers or award additional priority outside the scheme's rules in exceptional circumstances. Please see case of Leicester CC v Shearer [2013] EWCA Civ 1467; R (on the applications of KS & Ors) v Haringey LBC [2018] EWHC 587 (Admin)”</p>	<p>Discretion forms part of the Housing Allocation Scheme. See Section 14.3 and Appendix 5.</p>
<p>“Changes represent a really logical approach to recognising the nuance of need across applicants to the housing register. With the increased number of band 2 allocations, in response to the increase in duties accepted in addressing the current housing and homelessness crisis, it makes sense to differentiate those in a higher level of need to escalate their priority”.</p>	<p>Support noted.</p>
<p>“Due to the changing nature of this landscape, we welcome the flexibility proposed within this scheme which makes it open to regular review. This will ensure there will be continued commitment by CDC and alignment with CDC policies to the countywide strategy in relation to preventing and tacking rough sleeping and single homelessness, and ensuring there are no barriers for people moving on from supported a/c”.</p>	<p>Support noted.</p>

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10 September 2024

Summary of Comment	Officer Response
Do housing applicants with rent arrears have offers withdrawn and could this be negotiated to prevent them being overlooked for housing.	<p>Applicants work with clients on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>As part of the application process, the Council routinely requests a copy of a landlord reference.</p> <p>The applicants rent record arrears would be analysed at the time that the bid is placed, and potential nomination is made. Applicants should have cleared or should clear housing related debt that is recorded, in full, before a nomination is made. Alternately, there should be evidence to show that a concerted effort has been made to address the rent arrears through an arrangement negotiated with their landlord.</p>
How many are currently on the waiting list	Around 2050 households
What is the current available stock	The Council lets around 550 properties a year
How many providers do we work with and do they all work within the same criteria	<p>Around 30 providers operating within the district, Sanctuary are the largest. The Allocations Scheme forms the criteria used to assess applications. All providers operating agree our Nominations Agreement, that informs our engagement with them.</p> <p>Some properties have different criteria in terms of age and medical need suitability and these criteria are outlined within the advert.</p>
How does the Policy relate to supply of homes?	The policy relates to allocation of homes, not supply. Supply of homes relates to the Local Plan.
Is Domestic Abuse a significant problem in Cherwell and what actions are being taken to address?	Our records show that 3% of our applicants to the waiting list in the year to date have stated Domestic Abuse as their main reason for applying.

	<p>The Council jointly commissions domestic abuse services with other districts and City Council through the ODAS contract.</p> <p>The Council is also seeking Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to help recognise positive practice and improve services to residents.</p>
<p>Is it expected that the waiting list will increase with the proposed change in eligibility from £60,000 to £80,000 for larger homes?</p>	<p>This criterion has not been reviewed in some time and therefore a review as income and prices change is considered prudent.</p> <p>Our calculations show that it would be appropriate to allow those with income and savings below £80,000 to join the housing register.</p>