

## Summary of Changes to the Proposed Allocations Policy

Theme	Proposed Allocation Policy		Reason for change
	Relevant section		
Local Connection	Non qualification rule 1 – page 5	We have increased the local connection to 2 years continuous residency and tightened up the requirement for those in permanent employment in the area and removed the key worker status connection to the area.	Prioritise established local families who have a strong connection for residence of 2 years or more. There are a number of exceptions to the 2-year residency rule found on page 7-8; for instance, those fleeing domestic abuse or extreme threats of violence from another area or have close family who they need to provide or receive essential support; or, have employment where it is extremely difficult to commute.
Assessment of Need – out of area or very low need.	Section 5 Assessment of need and circumstances page 43-51	<p>Removed Band D – this is applicants who live out of area or who have a very low need. This would also include those who live in the district, who are registered to move but have no housing need.</p> <p>Amendment to Band C – currently those who live in private rented, social housing or lodge within the district are placed in Band C even when there is no housing need. We propose to remove this.</p>	<p>The demand on the register is unprecedented and these changes mean that those with a legitimate housing need are awarded a band on the housing register, Approx 30% of those on the housing register have no housing need or live out of area. Removing band D removes these people who are unlikely to ever be allocated a BDC property from the register. This change will also remove those who wish to move within the district but have no housing need. This choice to move could be resolved by way of mutual exchange.</p> <p>This change is to reflect that Bands are awarded based on a housing need.</p>

Assessment of needs	Section 5 Assessment of need and circumstances page 43-51	We intend to expand the criteria to address when an applicant will qualify for statutory housing need bands A, B and C.	The revised policy is clearer about when a band will be awarded for each housing criteria within each band. This will mean assessments are always consistently applied.
Suspension – rent arrears	Non qualification rule 4 – page 11-14	Amended the suspension for rent arrears section to reflect different amount/categories of debt but to allow people on the register if they have maintained repayment agreements and reduced arrears to within an acceptable threshold.	We acknowledge that people may have arrears and former tenancy arrears but if they can demonstrate a commitment to maintain repayment agreements they will no longer be suspended from the register.
Suspension for refusal of suitable offers	Penalty for refusing 2 suitable offers – page 31 and appendix 1 (Page 55)	We will suspend an applicant who refuses 2 suitable offers within a 12-month period. Suitable offers are defined within the policy,	To address where applicants bidding for properties, later changing their mind after the bidding cycle had ended. This builds in extra work and delays in letting properties which affects void times.
Overcrowding	Assessment of bedroom size - Page 37-38	Tightened up the rules around overcrowding, this is now more reflective of the statutory rules.	The previous policy was overly complicated in this area and is now reflective of the statutory overcrowding rules
Transfers	Non qualification rule 7 – page 17	We do not allow someone to move to another Council property within 3 years. This applied to both new tenancies and those who have terminated a Council or Housing Association property within the timescales.	The time scale remains the same but ensures everyone is treated the same regardless of tenure.
Review of decisions	Right of review – page 40-42	Simplified the review process. The legislation sets out when an applicant can request a review. In the first instance there will be an informal review carried out. If the applicant is unhappy then they can escalate this to a formal review. Whilst there is legal right to request a review of a review decision, the informal element of this allows for a 2-stage process.	To make the process quicker and easier for applicants and officers alike.

Home ownership	Non qualification rule 5 – page 16	<p>Any owner occupier is to be excluded from the register unless</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If as a result of a divorce settlement a Court has ordered that an applicant may not reside in the former matrimonial or civil partnership home in which they still have a legal interest for a period which is likely to exceed 5 years and that restriction is not due to being a perpetrator of domestic abuse, or</li> <li>• Where someone is a homeowner and homeless due to domestic abuse and whose property has not yet been sold. In these circumstances a decision will be made as to whether to treat this as an exemption based on the facts and circumstances of the case, or</li> <li>• The applicant has a substantial disability, and their current home is not suitable for their specific needs and cannot be adapted in a reasonable period of time and they cannot find an alternative property suitable for their disability on the open market.</li> </ul>	Demand on the register is unprecedented and many owner occupiers have the means to secure suitable accommodation without the need for assistance from the local authority. There are some circumstances which will give rise to being accepted on the register, but these are limited.
Over 60 and no housing need	Band C page 50	Applicants over 60 (who are not homeowners) without a statutory housing need but would be willing to move to an older person property will be awarded a band C.	This reflects that approximately 45% of the Councils housing stock is older persons accommodation and ensures we do not have significant empty properties of this type.
General terminology	Throughout	In addition, we have identified some areas where the policy was inconsistent and have remedied this as well as updating the terminology and job roles.	