

Committee Manager: Erica Keegan (Ext. 37547)

6 March 2017

HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

A meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group will be held in Committee Room 1 (the Pink Room) at the Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton on **Thursday, 23 March 2017 at 6.00pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors; Clayden (Chairman), Mrs Pendleton (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Bicknell, Blampied, Mrs Daniells, Edwards, Mrs Harrison-Horn, Oppler, Mrs Porter & Mrs Rapnik.

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial/pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda.

You should declare your interest by stating:

- a) the item you have the interest in
- b) whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- c) whether it is also a prejudicial/pecuniary interest

You then need to re-declare your interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent

3. HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Housing & Customer Services Working Group Minutes 26 January 2017 ***(attached)***.

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. *AMENDMENTS TO ALLOCATION SCHEME

This report sets out the proposed further amendments to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme for the working group's consideration and recommendation to Cabinet.

6. *HOUSING AND PLANNING ACT 2016

This report provides a brief overview with regard to the elements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 which impacts on the Housing Service.

7. *WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The working group will be asked to plan part of the work programme for 2017/18 ***(Outline attached)***.

(Note: *Indicates report is attached for Members of the Committee only and the Press (excluding exempt items). Copies of reports can be viewed on the Council's web site at www.arun.gov.uk or can be obtained on request from the Committee Manager.)

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

26 January 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Clayden (Chairman), Mrs Pendleton (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Bicknell, Blampied, Edwards, Mrs Harrison-Horn [from Minute 25 to 29 Part], Mrs Porter and Mrs Rapnik.

Councillors; Ambler, Bence, R Bower, Chapman, Dillon, and Haymes were also present for all or part of the meeting.

25. APOLOGY FOR ABSCENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Daniells.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Reasons

- The Council has adopted the government’s example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions of the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

Where a Member declares a “Prejudicial Interest” this will, in the interest of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

27. MINUTES

An amendment to the minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Customer Service Working Group held on 24 November 2016 was made as follows:

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

- Councillor Mrs Ayres was removed under Members Present as her apologies had been given and recorded.
- Councillor Blampied was added as attending under Members Present.
- Councillor Mrs Porter was added as attending under Members Present.

Following this amendment the minutes were approved and then signed by the Chairman.

28. UPDATE FROM STONEPILLOW

The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Chief Executive of StonePillow, Geoffrey Willis, to the meeting.

Members received an update on the work of StonePillow from the Chief Executive. Having recently joined StonePillow, he outlined his background in Health, Education and Social Care charities that supported vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

StonePillow’s objectives were outlined as a five stage plan towards successfully offering shelter, information and support and empowerment to homeless individuals that would help make positive changes in their lives. It was noted that the work of StonePillow continued against a background of a national rise in homelessness whilst public funding was being cut. The Chief Executive informed Members that a recent estimate indicated a 30% increase in Rough Sleeping in the last 12 months and so StonePillow’s services were being challenged to meet demand.

StonePillow’s five stages towards successfully housing a homeless individual were explained:

1. Outreach – The first step was to find and engage with homeless individuals. StonePillow did not undertake outreach work but were passed cases from other agencies that referred individuals to StonePillow’s day centres at Chichester or Bognor Regis.
2. Engagement – Following outreach StonePillow could engage with individuals at their day centres, assessing their needs and providing appropriate support.
3. This included Recovery Services for alcohol and drug addiction. StonePillow operated a residential rehabilitation centre, a 12 bedroom facility at Canada Grove which was staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week. StonePillow had a strict abstinence policy with anyone failing a drug test being asked to leave after one chance.
4. Hostels and Supported Accommodation – In a move towards independent living individuals could be housed in hostels or

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

supported accommodation. This was largely funded by Housing Benefit. The majority of supported accommodation was based in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton as Chichester was more expensive.

5. Inclusion and Wellbeing – The next stage towards independent living was to empower an individual and help recover their confidence. A number of StonePillow projects such as Restore and Revive which offered work based skills and training enabled a sense of self-worth through work.

StonePillow’s Chief Executive stated that this type of approach towards tackling homelessness was 87% effective, better than the national average of 65%.

As well as long term help for homeless people StonePillow operated an emergency, Severe Weather Emergency Protection (SWEP) service. It was noted that figures for rough sleeping had doubled since 2010. This was due to the national problems of a lack of affordable housing, private rent evictions increasing and a large increase in mental health issues and Social Care referrals. StonePillow used their Lodge as a facility for those that had been discharged from hospital with no home.

Stonepillow’s Chief Executive outlined the concerns he had with SWEP provision in that numbers of homeless needing emergency facilities were increasing but the cost of provision outstripped the grant the Council provided. It was noted that StonePillow were actively seeking to find a more suitable location for cold weather, emergency, rough sleepers.

Following the briefing from StonePillow’s Chief Executive a number of questions were asked which were responded to at the meeting. The Chief Executive outlined his concern that the number of cases of homelessness was increasing with 1 in 3 people who lose their job unable to pay their mortgage/rent after the second month. A number of homeless cases were due to mental health issues and numbers of homelessness cases from the Social Care system was also increasing.

The Chief Executive’s vision for the future was to provide a ‘one stop shop’ type of facility where all relevant agencies could be situated in one hub so that homeless individuals had immediate access to the required support. This would include mental health support as StonePillow was part of a Mental Healthcare Alliance. This would aid engagement and help to effectively progress a homeless individual’s circumstances.

Following discussion, the Chairman and Members of the Working Group thanked StonePillow’s Chief Executive for attending the meeting and providing an excellent, informative presentation. Members agreed that the Council would continue to take a keen and active interest in StonePillow and their work.

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

29. HOUSING FRAUD INVESTIGATION

The working group received a presentation from the Housing Fraud Investigator. It was explained that the Housing Fraud Investigator was a new role introduced by the Government’s Housing Fraud Act which came into force in 2013. Previously the Council had very few powers to look at Housing Fraud.

Members were informed that the Council was committed to finding and preventing Housing Fraud to ensure that their properties were being given to the people that really need them. Arun District Council’s Fraud Investigator had started the position in January 2016 and had achieved an excellent standard of success in detecting fraud. It was reported that from 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016 the Council received 6 properties back following detected fraud. From 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016 the Council obtained a further 6 properties. The official savings to Arun District Council from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 was reported as £488,230.43.

Examples of success stories were outlined together with pictures of properties that had been converted and illegally sub-let. The Housing Fraud investigator pointed out that a Council Tenant could make a large amount of money by paying council rent prices whilst charging other individuals a much larger fee to stay in the property. Members were shocked to note some of the lengths people would go to in committing housing fraud and the subsequent damage to the Council’s property.

The Housing Fraud Investigator had also stopped fraudulent Right to Buy Applications once enquiries had been made as to the legality of the requests.

Following questions responded to at the meeting, the working group invited the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Bence, to speak. The Cabinet Member for Housing was extremely proud and pleased with the Council’s Housing Team and confident they would continue to deliver including with respect to the Housing Revenue Account. He announced that the Council would be taking a Housing Stock Survey with each Council property being checked for its condition. It was expected that this exercise could identify further cases of fraud as well as monitoring stock for suitability. He was pleased that the Council was embracing opportunity and planning to build more properties at affordable rents. The Cabinet Member for Housing was also very pleased with the outcome of the Housing Fraud Investigator’s appointment. It was pointed out that the post holder had worked tirelessly to achieve good results. The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Housing for his contribution.

Further discussion highlighted the following key points:

- The Housing Fraud Act did not include Housing Association Properties. The Housing Fraud Investigator stated that the

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

Council could expand its team and offer their services to Housing Associations.

- It was anticipated that detecting cases of Housing Fraud would get more difficult as time goes on as all the more obvious cases are addressed and word of mouth alerts fraudsters.
- The numbers of Council properties damaged by fraudsters were noted and although the Council billed for damage there was no guarantee they would receive monies.

The Chairman thanked the Housing Fraud Investigator for her informative presentation and the working group praised and thanked her for her excellent work.

The Housing & Customer Services Working Group was in strong agreement that the post of Housing Fraud Investigator should be made permanent.

30. DIGITAL TEA PARTY

The Head of Housing & Customer Services provided an update on Arun District Council’s initiative to host a ‘Digital Drop-In’ for the residents of Arun to help them access the Council’s services on their computer, tablet or mobile phone. Any other technical questions would also be addressed as well as giving coaching on how to use google and navigate a local government website.

It was noted that the ‘Digital Drop-In’ would be held on Wednesday 15 February 2017 in the Council Chamber at Bognor Regis Town Hall. Five members of the Council’s Customer Service staff would be on hand to assist customers. Moving forward other suitable locations in Arun would be investigated for a further ‘Digital Drop-In’. It was explained that the Council could host this every two or three months but would be led by demand and plans remained flexible.

Public access to the Council’s digital services had reduced staff workloads by encouraging digital contact. One example given was the Council’s Christmas closure where information on the Council’s website with respect to emergency contact numbers was used by residents. In 2015 66 people had used this website page. This year, following promotion through Facebook and Twitter, 1000 had made use of this website page.

In discussion the working group mentioned groups which could be made aware of the Digital Drop-In idea as it would be of benefit to them as a customer base. U3A (University of the Third Age) and Age UK were two organisations that were suggested. The Head of HR and Customer Services welcomed these ideas and asked for further suggestions to be mailed to herself or the Committee Manager.

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

The working group recognised and praised the five members of Customer Services staff who had worked very hard, with enthusiasm on the forthcoming Digital Drop-In. The Chairman thanked them for their hard work and thanked the Head of HR and Customer Services for her informative briefing. The working group were pleased to note the progress that had been made.

31. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

In discussing the work programme 2016/17 it was noted that the meeting on 23 March 2017 would consider the work programme for 2017/18. The Vice- Chairman stated and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to include StonePillow in 2017/18 to monitor progress especially with Severe Weather Emergency Provision.

The working group then noted the work programme 2016/17.

(The meeting concluded at 7.38pm)

AGENDA ITEM NO.5ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 23rd March 2017

Recommendation Paper

Subject : Amendments to Allocation Scheme

Report by : Judy Knapp

Report date: 16 February 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out proposed further amendments to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to recommend to Cabinet that the further amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme and its Equality Impact Assessment are agreed, with the implementation date of 1 July 2017.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Housing Allocation Scheme 2012 was amended in 2014 and 2016 following developments in case law and good practice.
- 1.2 Further amendments are now recommended which take into account case law as well as some changes which will help in the prioritization of applicants.

2.0 LOCAL PRIORITY – Economic Contribution

- 2.1 Arun's Allocation Scheme includes Local Priority categories which differentiate between applicants within the same Priority Band. The Economic Contribution prioritises applicants who work, or volunteer, or are undertaking vocational training.
- 2.2 Case law has emerged in 2016 from a legal challenge against the London Borough of Ealing. Several applicants won their claim that Ealing's policy

discriminated against those who were unable to work, train or volunteer. The claimants included those who were unable to work due to a disability and those who were single parents of young children. Ealing was found to have indirectly discriminated within the meaning of s.19 (2) of the Equality Act 2010; to have breached Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights; breached its Public Sector Equality Duty; and breached its obligations under s.11 of the Children Act 2004.

2.3 The judgement stated that the Council could have applied an exception to their policy, so that those who cannot work or volunteer receive the same priority to those who do.

2.4 In the light of this judgement, it is recommended that section 6.2.3 of the Allocation Scheme is updated to clarify that those who cannot work, train or volunteer will not be disadvantaged by this Local Priority. This will be further detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment of the Allocation Scheme.

3.0 EXCLUDING APPLICANTS GUILTY OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR – Spent convictions

3.1 Arun's Allocation Scheme excludes applicants if they, or a member of their household, have been guilty of unacceptable behavior within the past 5 years, and this behavior would be serious enough to lead to a possession order if the applicant were a Council tenant.

3.2 Case law has emerged in 2016 from a legal challenge against the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. An applicant won the claim that he could not be excluded from the Housing Register as a result of behaviours associated with a spent conviction.

3.3 In the light of this judgement, it is recommended that section 5.4.2 of the Allocation Scheme is updated to state that applicants will not be excluded for behaviours associated with a 'spent' criminal conviction.

4.0 MEDICAL NEEDS

4.1 Arun's Allocation Scheme has provision for applicants with medical conditions, or care needs, or learning difficulties which are impacted by their current accommodation. These are assessed and prioritised at Bands A1, B1 & C1.

4.2 Two recent Ombudsman investigations upheld complaints about the assessment of medical need: at Knowsley Housing Trust in 2014 and the London Borough of Croydon in 2016. In both cases the applicant complained

about the way that their medical need was assessed and their priority was determined.

- 4.3 The Ombudsman found that, in the Croydon case, it wasn't sufficiently clear that the applicant's medical condition and the impact of the current accommodation had been considered. In the Knowsley case, the Allocation Scheme did not explain Officers' procedures for seeking medical advice.
- 4.4 Following these Ombudsman decisions, it is recommended that sections 4.2 and 6.1 of the Allocation Scheme are updated to incorporate additional detail about: seeking confirmation from a healthcare professional; Officers carrying out home visits; the assessment of the impact of the current accommodation on the applicant's condition; as well as giving a more specific differentiation between Bands A1, B1 and C1.
- 4.5 In addition it is recommended that the Allocation Scheme includes provision, at sections 4.5 and 7.3, for couples who require separate bedrooms for medical or disability reasons, with confirmation from a medical professional.

5.0 PRIORITY FOR EX-SHELTERED SCHEME MANAGERS

- 5.1 Priority Band C5 of the Allocation Scheme provides for ex-Sheltered Scheme Managers who need to move from their service tenancy on retirement. This provision is no longer required as all of Arun's ex-Scheme Managers have reached retirement and have been rehoused. Service tenancies are no longer provided to employees.
- 5.2 It is recommended that this category is removed from Band C5, at section 6.1.1 of the Allocation Scheme.

6.0 HOMELESSNESS REVIEWS

- 6.1 The Allocation Scheme requires some clarification in the explanation of the legal right for an applicant to whom the Council owes a homelessness duty to request a review if they disagree about the property that has been offered to them.
- 6.2 It is recommended that this amendment is incorporated into section 6.5.4 of the Allocation Scheme.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment for the Allocation Scheme has been reviewed to ensure that it meets our public sector Equality duty, as well as other legislative requirements such as S.11 of the Children's Act 2004.
- 7.2 It makes clear that we have considered any direct or indirect effect of the Scheme on applicants, particularly those with a protected characteristic. It demonstrates the way that those effects have been considered in the light of the overall benefits of the Allocation Scheme.
- 7.3 It is recommended that the updated Equality Impact Assessment of the Allocation Scheme is agreed.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Members are asked to recommend to Cabinet that the further amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme and its Equality Impact Assessment are agreed, with the implementation date of 1 July 2017.

Background Papers: [Housing Allocation Scheme 2012](#)

Contact: Judy Knapp Housing Services Manager Ext: 37740

Arun Housing Services
Housing Allocations Scheme 2012
Amended 2014, 2016 & 2017

Approved by Cabinet on 10 September 2012
Decision Notice C/027/100912

CONTENTS

SECTION		PAGE
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Principles	3
3.0	Housing Register	5
3.2	Local Connection	5
3.3	Housing Need	6
3.4	Applications from under 18s	6
3.5	Joint applications	6
3.6	Applications from home owners	7
3.7	Transferring tenants	7
4.0	How to apply	7
4.1	Verifying and assessing housing need	7
4.2	Medical or care needs	8
4.3	Mobility needs	8
4.4	Registration of applications	9
4.5	Change of circumstances	9
4.6	Intentionally altering circumstances	10
4.7	False information	10
4.8	Renewing applications	11
5.0	Exclusions and removals from the Housing Register	11
5.4	Exclusions from the Housing Register	11
5.5	Removals from the Housing Register	13
6.0	The Priority Bands	13
6.2	Local Priority status	19
6.3	Band Registration date	19
6.4	Specific Qualification criteria	20
6.5	Bidding timescales	22
7.0	How vacant properties are advertised	22
8.0	How to bid	24
9.0	How applicants are selected	25
9.10	Direct allocations	26
10.0	Tenancy policy	26
11.0	Review and appeal procedures	27
12.0	Additional information	29
12.1	Consultation	28
12.2	Equalities Impact Assessment	29
12.3	Service standards	29
12.4	Information for applicants	30
12.5	Personal information	30
12.6	Implementation arrangements	30

Arun District Council – Allocations Scheme

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Allocations Scheme sets out the priorities and procedures for the allocation of affordable (social) housing in the Arun District. The provision of an Allocations Scheme is a legal requirement: Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 refers. The scheme has regard to relevant legislation and Government Codes of Guidance on social housing allocations.
- 1.2 The scheme has been developed in the context of the Localism Act 2011 which gives local authorities greater powers to determine the qualification criteria for social housing within their area and the priority given to applicants.
- 1.2 The scheme applies to applicants applying to join the housing register for the first time (referred to as 'applicants') and existing Council or Registered Provider tenants wanting to move (referred to as transfers).
- 1.3 The Council is committed to offering an element of choice to all those seeking housing, enabling people to make well-informed decisions about their housing options referred to as 'Choice Based Lettings'. Available vacant properties are advertised for applicants to place 'bids' for properties which are suitable for their needs and in their desired location. Choice based lettings will help to improve the sustainability of the affordable housing stock across Arun by encouraging residents to have a stake in their community.
- 1.4 The Allocations Scheme has regard to the Council's public sector equality duty, as defined in the Equality Act 2010 Section 149. It aims to ensure that the allocation of affordable homes and associated services is fair and that no service users are discriminated against on the grounds of their age, disability, race, colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, family status, transgender or transexuality.
- 1.5 Access to the scheme may be more difficult for people with a disability, sight or hearing impairment and for those who do not speak English as a first language. The Council is committed to helping all those who need assistance to access the scheme particularly by working closely with other agencies and supported housing providers.
- 1.6 The scheme has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. This is available on request and contains an action plan to ensure that the impact of the allocations policy is monitored and reported regularly.

2.0 Principles

The Allocations Scheme is based on the following key principles:

- 2.1 To allocate housing fairly, consistently and carefully and to ensure that allocation decisions are transparent.

- 2.2 To provide clear and easy to understand information to allow applicants to make informed choices, and ensure that the Allocations Scheme sets a clear framework by which to assess all applications, without fettering discretion.
- 2.3 To enable applicants to express choice in selecting their accommodation wherever possible.
- 2.4 To provide appropriate advice to applicants whom the Council is unable to house, including accurate and timely referrals to other agencies.
- 2.5 To provide a high quality service with clear standards. We expect staff to be able to do their jobs without fear of personal injury, abuse or discrimination.
- 2.6 To meet the requirements of Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the Localism Act 2011 giving 'reasonable preference', as defined by the housing legislation, to those applicants in greatest need. The Council is required to give reasonable preference to the following categories of person:
- Those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness or to whom a duty has been accepted (within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). (These applicants are placed in Band B, as defined by Priorities B2 & B3; and Band C, as defined by C2)
 - Those in unsanitary or overcrowded housing or living in unsatisfactory conditions. (These applicants are placed in Band A, as defined by Priority A7; and Band C, as defined by C8).
 - Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including a disability. (These applicants are placed in C1)
 - Those who need to live in a particular locality in the district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others. This includes social housing tenants who need to move for work-related reasons. (These applicants are placed in Band C, as defined by Priority C6).

Applicants may fall into one or more of these categories. In such cases, the highest Priority Band will apply.

- 2.7 To have regard to the Codes of Guidance issued by the Government from time to time and best practice.
- 2.8 To take account of the Council's own published Housing, Tenancy and Homelessness Strategies and local priorities.
- 2.9 To create sustainable communities having regard for local circumstances.
- 2.10 To reduce the cost and use of emergency interim accommodation by providing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and by making sure that homeless people and those threatened with homelessness are housed as soon as possible.

- 2.11 To make the best use of the affordable housing in the district ensuring that vacant homes are let quickly and efficiently.
- 2.12 The Allocations Scheme will be reviewed from time to time to reflect any changes in the law or Government Guidance and ensure continued improvement.

3.0 Housing Register

3.1 The two main criteria for joining the Housing Register are:

- to have a local connection within the Arun district; and
- to be in housing need, as defined by the Scheme.

Other applicants who do not meet these two main criteria may join the housing register in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Housing Services Manager.

3.2 Local connection

Local connection is defined as follows:-

- 3.2.1 The applicant or their partner are currently living in the Arun district and have lived in the Arun District permanently for at least 5 years immediately prior to the application date; or are currently living in the Arun district and have lived permanently in the Arun District for 10 years out of the last 15 years.
- 3.2.2 The applicant or their partner has worked on a full or part time basis (24 hours per week) in the Arun District for the past 2 years and remains in employment in the Arun District.
- 3.2.3 The applicant or their partner needs to be in the Arun District to give or receive regular daily support from or for a close relative (parents, adult children, brother and/or sister). This support must be required on an ongoing long term basis and cannot be provided by other family members or available support agencies. The family member must be permanently resident in Arun District and have lived here permanently for at least 10 years immediately prior to the application date.
- 3.2.4 An applicant has been accepted as being owed the main homeless duty. The Homelessness main duty is defined as the main duty under Section 193 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).
- 3.2.5 Other exceptional circumstances that the local authority might reasonably consider constitutes a local connection as agreed with the Housing Services Manager.
- 3.2.6 The Council will not disqualify the following applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the Authority's district:
- a) members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge
 - b) bereaved (or divorced or separated) spouses and civil partners of

members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of (or divorce or separation from) their spouse or partner

- c) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

3.3 Housing need

Housing need is defined as one of the criteria listed in the Priority Bands A, B & C. The Reasonable Preference categories are incorporated into these Priority Bands.

3.4 Applications from Under 18s

- 3.4.1 Anyone over the age of 16 can join the housing register, although accommodation is not usually offered until they are over 18. In the event that there is an urgent housing need, a further assessment will be carried out. Suitable accommodation will only be offered if the young person can live independently, can sustain a tenancy and has an identified package of support available to them.
- 3.4.2 A person under the age of 18 does not have the legal capacity to hold a tenancy. Therefore the Council or a Registered Provider partner will normally expect that any tenancy granted to a person who is under 18 will be held by Trustees until that person attains the age of 18.
- 3.4.3 If there is a joint application from a household which includes children and one or both of the applicants are under 18 a licence will be given until the youngest applicant reaches 18. The Council or Registered Provider will not unreasonably withhold granting a new joint tenancy to both parties when the youngest applicant reaches the age of 18.

3.5 Joint Applications

- 3.5.1 Applications from partners who are cohabiting may be registered as joint applications giving both parties joint and several rights and responsibilities for any future tenancy. Partners include same sex couples.
- 3.5.2 In some cases one partner may be ineligible due to their immigration status; in this case the other partner will be registered as the sole applicant.
- 3.5.3 Joint applicants will not be accepted where either applicant (or any person included on their application) meets the criteria for exclusion or removal from the housing register.
- 3.5.4 Dependents, family members or other adults who are not partners of the applicant (such as residential carers) cannot usually be joint applicants.
- 3.5.5 If joint applicants wish to change to sole applications (for example, due to relationship breakdown) but wish to remain registered, each sole applicant will retain the current application date as long as they are still eligible to join the housing register. The applicant with residency and parenting responsibilities

for children may include them on the application. The other applicant may not include the children, even if there is shared custody or access arrangement.

3.6 Applications from Home Owners

3.6.1 Home owners who are in housing need and do not have the financial resources to resolve their housing situation will be accepted onto the housing register.

3.6.2 Where there are medical problems, applications will be accepted from Owners in the following circumstances:

- Where it is not possible to adapt the current accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition
- Where it is too expensive to adapt the existing accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition and they cannot afford to buy or rent suitable alternative housing
- The sale of the property would not allow the owner occupier to purchase or rent an alternative property suitable to their needs
- Where there is low demand for a particular type of property e.g. some Sheltered Housing Schemes

3.7 Transferring tenants

3.7.1 Arun District Council tenants may apply to transfer to another property if they meet the criteria to join the housing register.

3.7.2 A reference will be provided by the Council's Neighbourhood housing team to verify that there are no grounds for exclusion, such as rent arrears or housing-related debt; anti-social behavior; or other breaches of the tenancy agreement such as deliberate damage, or failure to report repairs, or provide access to the Council's contractors.

3.7.3 Where there are breaches of tenancy related to property condition, the tenant will not be eligible to join the housing register until these matters have been resolved to the Council's satisfaction.

4.0 How to apply

All applicants must complete an application form to join the housing register.

Applicants are encouraged to apply on line at:

<https://www1.arun.gov.uk/ihousing/HousingApplication/appstart.asp>.

Help will be provided where requested to complete an application form.

If it is not possible for an application to be made online, paper applications can be made available by contacting the Housing Allocations Team. However a paper application form will only be provided if it is not possible for the applicant to apply on line.

4.1 Verifying and assessing housing need

4.1.1 Applicants will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the form has been completed accurately.

Incorrect information could result in a change in priority at any stage of the process.

4.1.2 The Council will request additional information to clarify the applicant's circumstances and to verify the information that has been provided. Assessment of the application may be delayed while this is carried out. However, the Council will not delay the assessment of the application unreasonably.

4.1.3 The applicant will be asked to provide the following information:

- Personal ID for all members of the household (eg. birth certificate, passport, driving licence or similar)
- Proof of responsibility for any children in the household (eg. Child Benefit)
- Proof of current address, for all members of the household (eg. utility bills etc.)
- Proof of income and savings
- Proof of welfare benefits
- A copy of the present Tenancy Agreement, where applicable
- A Completion Statement if the applicants has sold a property within the last 5 years
- Proof of Right to Reside in the UK

4.1.4 The Council may undertake further verification such as identity, address and income checks and it may be necessary to visit an applicant at home in order to assess their current housing circumstances.

4.1.5 No allocations will be made until the applicant has provided all verification requested. If this is not provided when required it may result in the applicant losing a potential offer of accommodation.

4.2 Medical or Care Needs

4.2.1 Applicants with medical or care needs which are affected by their current accommodation should include these details on the housing register application form.

4.2.2 The Council may require specialist advice to describe the impact of the applicant's current accommodation on their condition, and to determine their housing need as a result. Specialist advice may include referral to a medical adviser, social services or other individuals or agencies as appropriate. The applicant will be asked to obtain this supporting evidence or advice from their healthcare or other specialist adviser. The Council will not pay for medical reports or assessments, but may seek its own specialist advice to determine medical or care needs. A home visit may be carried out to inform the assessment of medical or care needs.

4.2.3 The Council will assess the reported impact of the current accommodation and how that impact might be reduced by moving to alternative accommodation. This assessment will determine the medical priority of the application.

4.3 Mobility Needs

4.3.1 The Council may seek the advice of the Occupational Therapy service to assess housing needs when a member of the household has a substantial and permanent physical disability or other mobility needs.

4.3.2 One of the following mobility groups will be awarded, based upon the Occupational Therapy recommendations:

1. Wheelchair user indoors and outdoors.
2. People who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
3. Independent but can only manage one or two steps or stairs.

4.4 Registration of applications

4.4.1 Once an application is verified and needs are assessed, the Council will register the application and apply a registration date. The registration date is the date the application is received, or in the case of homeless applicants to whom a full duty is accepted, it is the date that the Council accepts a duty to accommodate, if this is earlier.

4.4.2 The applicant will receive written confirmation of their registration date, their priority status and reason for it, the property size for which they can bid and any mobility group if appropriate.

4.4.3 If an applicant disagrees with their registration date, their priority band or the assessment of their needs, they may request a review. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the review decision they have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel, Section 11 refers.

4.5 Change of circumstances

4.5.1 All applicants are required to inform the Council immediately when their housing circumstances change. A change in circumstances may mean an application is moved up or down a band, or local connection or local priority is altered. If any change results in a band change the Council will write to inform the applicant of the new band, their new priority date if applicable and their right to request a review of the decision, see 9.7 above.

4.5.2 If an applicant is moved into a higher band, then their priority date will be the date they were accepted into the higher band. If an applicant is moved to a lower band then their priority date will be their original acceptance date. If an applicant disagrees with the assessment of need the applicant can request a review. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the review decision they have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel, as per Section 11.

4.5.3 Additional adults will not be added to an application where this results in the need for larger accommodation than the applicant's household was originally eligible, other than if an overriding need such as ill health or disability can be evidenced. Simply wishing to be part of the household is not sufficient reason for inclusion on the application.

4.5.4 Adults requiring an extra bedroom will only be added to an application if they have a demonstrable need to live with the applicant and if they plan to make their sole home with the applicant on a permanent basis.

4.5.5 Applicants who require an additional bedroom to enable full time (24 hour) care, or couples who need to have separate bedrooms, may include this on their application. Proof of this requirement will be sought.

4.5.6 An expected child (or children) will be eligible to be included on the application from when the mother is 6 months into her pregnancy. At this date housing need and housing requirements will be assessed including the expected child as a member of the household.

4.6 Intentionally altering circumstances

4.6.1 Applicants have a responsibility not to intentionally worsen their circumstances to join the housing register or to progress to a higher band.

4.6.2 If an applicant has voluntarily given up accommodation which is suitable for their needs; or where a deliberate act results in the worsening of overcrowding or other housing circumstances without good reason; or the applicant has failed to take the Council's housing advice regarding their housing need, the Council may assess the application based on their previous circumstances. The Council will assess the applicant's housing need at their previous accommodation prior to the intentional act. This may result in the application being excluded or removed from the housing register for the duration which applies to that exclusion or removal.

4.7 False Information

4.7.1 It is an offence under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 to:

- Intentionally provide false information or
- Intentionally withhold information that should have been given to the Council

If an applicant intentionally provides false information or withholds information when applying to the Council for housing, the Council will exclude the application from the housing register for a period of 5 years. The Council may also take legal action against the applicant. This could include a fine of up to £5000.

4.7.2 If the applicant has already been granted a tenancy, and false information was used to obtain it, the Council may take action using the powers of the Housing Act 1996 and the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

4.7.3 The Council will carry out occasional audits of allocation decisions to check for incorrect or fraudulent allocations.

4.7.4 Allocations of accommodation made to employees of Arun District Council or to Arun District Councillors, or to members of their family where these family links are known to

the Council, will be checked and authorized by the Head of Housing to ensure these allocations comply fully with the Allocations Scheme.

4.8 Renewing Applications

- 4.8.1 The Council may write to an applicant on or after the anniversary of their application to establish whether an applicant wishes to remain on the housing register. If no response is received within 4 weeks a final letter will be sent advising the applicant that the application will be cancelled in one week if they fail to make contact. Where possible the Council will make additional contact with applicants who have a high a level of need.

5.0 Exclusions and removals from the Housing Register

- 5.1 If the Council decides that an applicant should be excluded or removed from the register, the Council will notify the applicant in writing setting out the reasons for the decision and the time period, where appropriate. Such a notice, if not received by the applicant, is treated as having been given if it is available at the Council's office for a reasonable period for collection either by the applicant or on the applicant's behalf.
- 5.2 If an applicant disagrees with the decision to exclude or remove their application from the register the applicant can request a review. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the review decision they have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel, Section 11 refers.
- 5.3 Applicants who have been excluded or removed from the housing register may subsequently make a homelessness application to the Council, and the Council may accept a main (unintentional) duty to the applicant under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). The duty to these previously excluded or suspended applicants may be discharged by an offer to private rented sector accommodation.

5.4 Exclusions from the Housing Register

Applicants will not qualify for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of affordable housing if one or more of the following criteria apply to their household:

5.4.1 Persons from abroad

By virtue of the Housing Act 1996 (section 160a), the Council cannot allocate housing to a person who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 unless that person falls within an exemption specified by the Secretary of State. The Allocations Scheme will abide by current eligibility criteria as in The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2012. The scheme will also continue to abide by any future legislative changes to eligibility rules determining who may be allocated social housing in England.

5.4.2 Persons guilty of unacceptable behaviour

The Council will exclude an applicant from the register where the applicant, or a member of the household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour within the past 5 years, which if the applicant was a tenant of the council would entitle the Council to a possession order (Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985).

Unacceptable behaviour can include:-

- Serious proven breach of tenancy conditions including harassment, nuisance and violence including serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours such as Demoted Tenancy, Notices upheld in respect of Environmental Protection Act or Noise Act.
- Conviction of using the accommodation or allowing its use for immoral or illegal purposes
- Allowing the property to be seriously damaged by the tenant or other residents or visitors which has resulted in an evidenced claim for the Council or other Landlord
- Conviction of an arrestable offence committed in the locality relating to violence or threats of violence
- Conviction of an arrestable offence relating to violence or threats of violence against Council staff
- Eviction from social housing for nuisance or harassment (racial or otherwise) where this behaviour is apparent at the time of application

Applicants excluded as a result of unacceptable behavior will remain excluded for a period of 5 years since the unacceptable behavior incident or offence. The applicants may re-apply to the housing register after this period of exclusion.

The Council will not exclude an applicant on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour where the events occurred more than 5 years ago, or for behaviours associated with a 'spent' criminal conviction.

5.4.3 Rent arrears and housing related debt

Applicants with rent arrears or housing related debts to the Council or other Registered Provider will not be accepted onto the register. Housing-related debt includes: rent bonds and deposits; any recoverable payments made on behalf of the applicant in respect of homelessness; debts in relation to previous tenancies with the Council or Registered Provider; Council Tax debt; and housing benefit overpayment. Applicants with housing debts, which are solely the result of the Social sector size criteria (or 'bedroom tax'), may qualify to join the housing register where there is a housing need to downsize to a right-size property, and where the debts will be cleared by qualification for the under-occupation incentive scheme.

Housing staff will carry out verification of housing related debts and will exempt any debts which result from benefit delay.

The applicant will remain excluded from the housing register until the debt is cleared in full.

5.4.5 Applicants with sufficient income and/or savings to secure alternative housing

Applicants will be considered as having sufficient financial resources to meet their own housing need if their total household income is three times greater than the Local Housing Allowance for their household size, or they have savings of more than £16,000 (or equivalent to savings/capital/asset limit for welfare benefit entitlement), or £50,000 for applicants eligible for sheltered housing. This will be reviewed in April each year.

Armed Forces compensation payments may not be considered in calculations of financial resources.

If an applicant has the means to secure their own accommodation, the Council will assess their housing need on this basis. This may result in the application being excluded or removed from the housing register.

5.5 Removals from the housing register

An application may be removed from the Housing Register in the following circumstances:

- An applicant does not respond to correspondence within 28 days
- An applicant asks the Council to cancel their application
- An applicant accepts the tenancy of a property provided by the Council or another social housing landlord
- An applicant accepts the offer of a home purchase by shared ownership
- An applicant no longer qualifies for the Register
- An applicant successfully moves under the mutual exchange scheme
- An applicant is no longer eligible to be on the housing register

If an applicant disagrees with the decision to remove their application from the register, the applicant can request a review. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the review decision they can have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel, Section 11 refers.

6.0 The Priority Bands

6.1 There are three priority bands: Band A, which is the highest priority band, Band B and Band C. To prioritise between applicants within the same band, the additional priority criteria of Local Priority Status and Registration date are applied. Specific qualification criteria relating to the property, or area, or landlord may also be applied. In some areas a Local Lettings Plan may also apply. These are all explained and described below:

6.1.1 Band A

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
A1	Medical A	The current housing conditions are having a serious or debilitating impact on a member of the	The Council will override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct

		household who has an emergency or life-threatening condition and it is essential to rectify the situation urgently. The emergency or life-threatening condition; <u>and</u> the serious or debilitating impact of the current accommodation; <u>and</u> an explanation of how this will be rectified or significantly improved in alternative suitable accommodation, must all be confirmed by a healthcare professional.	allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down-banded or removed from the housing register.
A2	Under-occupying 1+ bedroom	Applicants living in Council or Registered Provider accommodation within the Arun District who are under-occupying one or more bedrooms.	No required timescale for bidding.
A3	Disabled adaptations	Applicants releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock where the tenant does not require adaptations.	No required timescale for bidding.
A4	Successors	Statutory and non-statutory successors living in Arun District Council properties, where the Council has agreed to rehouse an applicant to more suitable accommodation than that currently occupied by the applicant, as authorized by the Housing Services Manager.	Applicants required to bid within 12 weeks of being placed in Band A. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
A5	Fixed term tenants	Applicants who have a fixed term tenancy with Arun District Council, where the fixed term is due to expire, and the current property is not the right size for the household or contains disabled adaptations which are no longer required.	Where an applicant fails to bid successfully for an alternative property within 6 months of being instructed to do so, the Council will make one offer of suitable alternative accommodation, on a fixed term tenancy.
A6	Decant	Arun District Council transfer applicants needing temporary rehousing where the property is imminently required for essential works and the tenant cannot remain in the property.	The Council will override the choice based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
A7	Overcrowding Notice or Prohibition Order	An Overcrowding Notice or Prohibition Order has been served by the Council's Private Sector Housing Section as a result of overcrowding; or disrepair; and where there is an imminent risk to the household; or it would be impossible to remain in the property whilst remedial works are carried out.	The Council will override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.

A8	Emergency priority	Severe housing need for exceptional circumstances, in crisis situations which warrant emergency priority as agreed by the Housing Services Manager. This excludes homeless applicants to whom the Council has a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).	The Council will override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.

6.1.2 Band B

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
B1	Medical B	<p>The current housing conditions are having a significant adverse effect on the medical condition or learning difficulties or care needs of a member of the household; and there is evidence that the condition will be significantly worsened over a period of time in the current accommodation; and there is evidence that this will be rectified or significantly improved by alternative suitable accommodation.</p> <p>The medical condition, learning difficulty, or care need; and the significant adverse effect of the current accommodation; and an explanation of how this will be rectified or significantly improved in alternative suitable accommodation, must all be confirmed by a healthcare professional.</p>	<p>Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 3 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application.</p> <p>However, the Council may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p>
B2	Homeless (making own arrangements)	<p>Homeless households owed the main (unintentional) duty by Arun District Council, and making their own temporary arrangements. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).</p> <p>Priority B2 includes homeless applicants owed the main (unintentional) duty by Arun District Council, who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and to</p>	<p>For homeless applicants making their own housing arrangements while bidding for permanent accommodation: no required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>

		whom the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.	
B3	Homeless (in emergency or temporary accommodation)	Homeless households owed the main (unintentional) duty by Arun District Council, and placed in emergency or temporary accommodation. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Priority B3 includes homeless applicants owed the main (unintentional) duty by Arun District Council, who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.	For homeless applicants placed in emergency or temporary accommodation: the Council will make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.
B4	Returning homeless after accommodated in the private rented sector	Previously homeless households accommodated in the private rented sector (which discharged Arun District Council's main unintentional duty) who have become unintentionally homeless again within 2 years. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). In these cases, the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.	For homeless applicants making their own housing arrangements while bidding for permanent accommodation: no required timescale for bidding. For homeless applicants placed in emergency or temporary accommodation: the Council will make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.
B5	Lacking rooms	Applicants with dependent children lacking 1 bedroom <u>and</u> lacking kitchen or bathroom; or sharing kitchen or bathroom with non-family members (as defined by S.113 Housing Act 1985); or lacking 2 bedrooms. This excludes households in interim or temporary accommodation provided by Arun District Council	No required timescale for bidding
B6	Fostering or adoption	To enable fostering or adoption where an assessed need and an agreement has been reached between Social Services and the Housing Services Manager to provide permanent accommodation	No required timescale for bidding

		prior to any placement taking place	
B7	Returning from institution	Applicants who were previously tenants of Arun District Council, who are returning from institutions, when a housing commitment was made in order to secure the relinquishment of the Council tenancy on entering the institution	No required timescale for bidding. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
B8	From care or supported housing	Applicants moving on from care or supported housing, as authorised by the Housing Services Manager	No required timescale for bidding

6.1.3 Band C

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
C1	Medical C	<p>The current housing conditions have a negative impact on the medical condition or learning difficulties of a member of the household; <u>and</u> either the condition, or the person's ability to cope with it, is likely to be improved by alternative suitable accommodation.</p> <p>Priority C1 includes applicants who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' on medical or welfare grounds, as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocation scheme do not apply.</p>	Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 3 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in the removal of the application. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
C2	Homeless prior to main duty	<p>Applicants who are defined as homeless or threatened with homelessness under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), prior to the main (unintentional) homelessness duty being determined.</p> <p>Priority C2 includes homeless applicants who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>
C3	Lacking 1 bedroom	Households lacking one bedroom.	No required timescale for bidding.
C4	Sharing kitchen/bathroom with family	Applicants with dependent children living with, and sharing a kitchen or bathroom with, family members (as	No required timescale for bidding.

	members	defined by S.113 Housing Act 1985) who are not part of the immediate household and not part of the housing application .This excludes households in interim or temporary accommodation provided by Arun District Council.	
C5	Management transfer	Applicants living in Arun District Council accommodation requiring a transfer to properties of the same size & type for significant reasons, as agreed by the Housing Services Manager.	No required timescale for bidding. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. Where such direct allocations are refused, the Council will review the priority of the case and consider removal of the priority and removal from the housing register.
C6	Give or receive support; or to take up employment	<p>Applicants who need to move to a particular area within Arun to give support, which cannot be met by others; or to receive support or specialised medical treatment, which is not available in the current location; and where failure to meet that need would cause hardship; and where the distance from the applicant's current location is significantly impacting on the ability to deliver or receive that support. The housing need within Arun to be confirmed by a healthcare professional or other statutory agency.</p> <p>Existing social housing tenants who need to move into Arun, or to a particular area within Arun, for permanent employment and who cannot fulfil their contract of employment in their current accommodation after making reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Before applying to the Arun housing register, applicants must make reasonable adjustments in order to remain in their current accommodation when taking up new employment. These may include arranging transport to work or organizing the care of dependents. Band C6 will only apply when the</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>

		<p>employment cannot be fulfilled, even after making such adjustments.</p> <p>Applicants will need to provide proof of their current social tenancy, their employment start date and work location and to demonstrate why reasonable adjustments are not possible.</p> <p>Priority C6 includes applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) qualify for a 'reasonable preference', as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6; or ii) need to move for employment reasons, as per the Qualification Criteria for Right to Move Regulations 2015; and iii) to whom the local connection criteria of the allocation scheme do not apply. 	
C7	Sheltered	Applicants for sheltered housing where there is no higher housing need.	No required timescale for bidding
C8	Insanitary or overcrowded housing	<p>Applicants living in insanitary or overcrowded housing.</p> <p>For C8 priority, 'insanitary housing' will contain Category 1 hazards as assessed under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), as confirmed by the Council's Private Sector Housing team or the Neighbourhood Housing team; and where there is no planned remedial or improvement works or enforcement action.</p> <p>'Overcrowded housing' is defined by the statutory standard set out in the Housing Act 1985, sections 324 to 326, as confirmed by the Council's Private Sector Housing team or the Neighbourhood Housing team; and where there is no planned remedy or enforcement action to resolve the overcrowding.</p> <p>Priority C8 includes applicants who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' on the grounds of insanitary or overcrowded housing, as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and to</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p> <p>The priority of C8 cases will be reviewed regularly and applicants may be removed from the housing register if the insanitary conditions or overcrowding have been resolved.</p>

		whom the local connection criteria of the allocation scheme do not apply.	
--	--	---	--

6.2 Local Priority Status

6.2.1 Local priority status will be the first consideration when prioritising between applicants in the same band. The Local Priority classes have an equal status with each other.

6.2.2 Local Priority – Resident in Arun

The applicant is currently resident in the Arun district.

6.2.3 Local Priority - Economic Contribution

The applicant is currently making the following economic contribution:

- in paid employment in Arun (minimum of 24 hours per week); or
- attending a recognised vocational training course, leading to a qualification, which is likely to improve chances of employment; or
- undertaking voluntary work in Arun for a minimum of 8 hours per week, which has been verified;
- and has been carrying out one or more of these economic contributions for the last two years.

Applicants who are unable to work, or attend vocational training, or volunteer due to a disability, childcare constraints or another 'protected characteristic' of the Equalities Act, will not be disadvantaged by this Local Priority.

6.2.4 Local Priority – Move-on from Supported Housing

Applicants who need to move on from care or supported housing in Arun are placed in Band B with the agreement of the Housing Services Manager. Move-on accommodation is considered essential to ensure that limited supported housing resources are used most effectively.

6.3 Band Registration date

6.3.1 Registration date will be the second consideration, after Local Priority status, when prioritising between applicants in the same band.

6.4 Specific qualification criteria

6.4.1 Some advertised properties may have specific qualification criteria.

6.4.2 Property Qualification Criteria 1 (PQC1) - Transfer scheme

To promote mobility within the Council's housing stock, 1 in 4 (25%) of all vacancies of affordable homes (including first time lettings of new build homes) will be offered to existing tenants only, providing their landlord is participating on the transfer scheme. The Council will ensure that those properties offered to transfer applicants are a fair representation (property type and size) of all annual vacancies.

Note: both the Council and Registered Providers may suspend applications from transferring tenants where the tenant's current home requires repairs, cleaning, decorating and other general maintenance which are the tenant's responsibility, in accordance with the tenancy agreement. An application will be activated when the tenant has completed the necessary work. Exceptions may be made for vulnerable applicants, older residents and where an applicant is downsizing.

6.4.3 Property Qualification Criteria 2 (PQC2) – Rural Housing

To sustain and support rural communities, 100% of all vacancies (including first time lettings of new build homes) in the following rural parishes (as defined by the Rural Gazetteer 2002) will be allocated to applicants who have a substantial local connection with the parish:

Arundel, Findon, Clapham, Houghton, Patching, Slindon, Madehurst, Walberton, Fontwell, Burpham, Wepham, Warningcamp, Lyminster and Crossbush, South Stoke, Climping and Ford.

This will include households from the gypsy and traveller community who have established a connection with the Parish by virtue of resorting to the Parish in accordance with the Parish local connection criteria.

The Parish local connection criteria are one of the following:

- Applicants who have lived in the parish for at least 2 years
- Applicants who have previously lived in the parish for 3 years out of the last 5
- Applicants with close relatives generally defined as parents, adult children and siblings who have lived continuously in the parish for 5 years.
- People who have permanent full time employment or an offer of permanent employment which provides an important service to the local community and who need to live locally to carry out their duties.

Where there are no bids from applicants with a local connection to the rural parish, other applicants may be considered for the property.

6.4.4 Property Qualification Criteria 3 (PQC3) – Property for people aged 50+ and 60+

Property for people aged 50+ and 60+ (including sheltered housing) will be specifically advertised as such.

6.4.5 Property Qualification Criteria 4 (PQC4) - Property for people with mobility needs

Property for people with mobility needs will be advertised as suitable for applicants with the following three categories:

1. Properties suitable for wheelchair user indoors and outdoors
2. Properties suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time
3. Properties suitable for people who are independent but can only manage one or two steps

6.4.6 Property Qualification Criteria 5 (PQC5) – Property subject to an Employment Condition

The Council may restrict the allocation of affordable homes in estates where the levels of unemployment are above average, when compared to other areas in the district, to applicants where at least one household member is either in full or part time work (minimum of 24 hours per week) and has been in work for the last two years.

6.4.7 Property Qualification Criteria 6 (PQC6) – Property subject to a Local Lettings Plan

6.4.8 A local lettings plan is an agreement between the Council or Registered Provider and local tenants and residents which restricts lettings in the area to certain households. This is done to tackle a specific issue or problem that has been identified locally at block, street, estate or neighbourhood level, or to achieve a sustainable community on a new development.

6.4.9 Local lettings plans allow the council or Registered Provider to deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents.

6.4.10 Recommendations for local lettings plans may include:

- Establishing and sustaining a mixed, stable and sustainable community on a new the development to foster a sense of ownership and community;
- Ensuring new tenants can sustain their tenancies;
- Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties;
- Giving preference to tenants/applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area or ward;
- Preference to tenants /applicants who are giving or receiving support to or from family/extended family, voluntary work, day care, playgroups or other support from locally-based organisations;
- Preference to people who are employed;
- Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the council's letting policy – eg this could be couples without children, where there is a high density already in the area of families with children;
- Preference to people who are under occupying or who are overcrowded in their current home in the local vicinity;
- Sensitivity around the letting of homes to vulnerable people;
- Once adopted, a local lettings plan will override the Allocations Scheme. Any properties subject to a plan will be clearly labelled when advertised for lettings.

6.5 Bidding Timescales

6.5.1 The bidding requirements, which apply to each Band criteria, are set out within the

Priority Bands. These requirements reflect the urgency of the housing need; the availability of temporary accommodation; ensuring the best use of housing stock; minimizing costs.

- 6.5.2 Some priority criteria will allow applicants the opportunity to bid for suitable properties on choice based lettings. Applicants are expected to maximize their opportunities for rehousing by bidding on all available properties of the right size in the Arun District.
- 6.5.3 For some Priority Bands the Council will override the choice based lettings system and make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable accommodation, particularly when there is an urgent need to rehouse.
- 6.5.4 For homeless applicants this reasonable direct allocation will discharge the Council's homelessness duty. If the offer is refused, the application will be reviewed and may be cancelled. If a homeless applicant disagrees with the offer or the discharge of duty, they have the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered and/or the Discharge of the Homelessness duty, under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996. The allocated property will not remain available to the applicant pending the outcome of the review process.
- 6.5.5 Where the priority criteria allow applicants to bid for suitable properties within a designated period of time, the Council will review the application at the end of that time and determine whether the bidding period will be extended; whether a reasonable direct allocation of suitable accommodation is required; or whether the priority no longer applies to the application and it will be down-banded or removed from the housing register.

7.0 How vacant properties are advertised

7.1 Vacant properties will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings website. A freesheet describing the advertised properties is also available on request. Eligibility criteria will be included in the advertisement such as:

- Size of household
- Whether the property is suitable for children
- Age limitations
- The mobility group, if applicable
- The level of care and support available
- Whether pets are allowed
- Whether it is available for cross boundary bids (the Council may advertise properties outside the Arun district where there is little or no demand for a particular property)
- Whether it is sheltered accommodation
- Who owns the property i.e. council or housing association
- The weekly rent including any other charges
- An estimate of the date the property will be ready for occupation
- Whether a local lettings policy applies
- Whether it is a rural property and a local connection criteria applies

- 7.2 The property advert will state the rent charge, which will vary according to the landlord and whether an 'affordable' or a 'social' rent is being applied. Applicants may exercise choice regarding the properties for which they bid. However, if the applicant is subject to bidding time limits, they will be expected to bid for both social and affordable rented homes as both will be considered suitable.
- 7.3 The Council needs to ensure that all properties are used as effectively as possible therefore the Council will advertise and allocate Council owned properties subject to the following size criteria:

Property size	Suitable household size
Bedsit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single person or • a couple
1 bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single person or • a couple
2 bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • households with 1 child, or • households with 2 children, or • a couple with a medical need for separate bedrooms
3 bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • households with 2 children of different gender where one or both is over the age of 10 years, or • households with up to 4 children of different gender aged 10 years or under, or • households with up to 4 children of the same gender aged 16 or under
4 bedroom (This includes 3 bedroom properties with 2 reception rooms, one of which can be used as a 4th bedroom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • households with 4 or more children, with at least 1 child aged 10 or under without a sibling of 10 or under, or • households with 4 or more children aged 11 to 16 without a sibling of the same gender, or • households with 4 or more children with at least one child aged over 16
5 bedroom (This includes 4 bedroom properties with 2 reception rooms, one of which can be used as a 5th bedroom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • households with 5+ children

- 7.4 The Council may allocate properties outside these size criteria to larger households, or where a bedroom is too small for more than one occupant.
- 7.5 The Council may allocate properties outside these size criteria for homeless households to whom the Council owes the main duty where it has been assessed that the property is reasonable for the household's needs. This offer of accommodation will discharge the Council's duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996. Homelessness decisions are subject to the right of review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996. The allocated property will not remain available to the applicant pending the outcome of the review process.
- 7.6 The Council may allocate up to one additional bedroom above the size criteria where

there is an overriding, proven medical need to support the request.

- 7.7 Housing Associations have their own size criteria for their properties, which may vary from the criteria stated above. This will be made clear in their advertisements.
- 7.8 Adapted properties will be advertised with a mobility classification as below, with additional information if there is the potential for further adaptation.
- a) Suitable for wheelchair- user indoors and outdoors.
 - b) Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
 - c) Suitable for people who are independent but can only manage one or two steps.
- 7.9 Transfer applicants may be entitled to the Under-Occupation Incentive Scheme if they move to a smaller property.
- 7.10 Where an age restriction applies and there are no eligible bidders, applicants without children may be considered.
- 7.11 Details of recent allocations, the number of bidders for each property and the band and priority date of the successful applicant are published on the choice based lettings Freesheet and on the Arun District Council website.

8.0 How to bid

- 8.1 The Council will advertise empty properties. Eligible applicants can make bids for properties by sending in a completed coupon, by telephone bidding, texting or by bidding online via the choice based lettings website. Full details of how to bid are set out in the Scheme User Guide which will be sent out to all applicants upon registration.
- 8.2 The Council is aware that some vulnerable applicants may need assistance in order to complete the registration and bidding process. The Council seeks to address this issue in the following ways:
- i. By providing regular training and awareness events for agencies who support vulnerable people to help them guide their clients through the process of registration and bidding.
 - ii. By giving direct advice and assistance to applicants, support staff and agencies during office hours either in person or by phone and by providing information on the Council's website.
 - iii. By providing information in a variety of formats and languages on request.
 - iv. Where necessary bids can be made by Council staff on behalf of applicants, proxy bidding by support staff, friends or family of a vulnerable person is also possible on request.
- 8.3 All bids for property will be checked against the eligibility criteria. Ineligible bids are

excluded from consideration. The Council will contact & advise applicants who regularly bid for properties for which they are not eligible.

- 8.4 The applicant has the choice to refuse an offer of accommodation if it has been allocated via the choice based lettings system. The applicant may bid for other properties in subsequent choice based lettings adverts.
- 8.5 Refusals of properties offered by a direct allocation may lead to a discharge of homelessness duty, or to a review of the priority banding, with the possibility of down-banding or removal from the housing register. Details of the bidding and direct allocation requirements are listed against each Priority Band criteria in section 6.

9.0 How applicants are selected

- 9.1 Qualifying bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided first by band, secondly by local priority and finally by priority date within the band.
- 9.2 If there are no eligible bidders for a property the Council may decide to make a direct allocation or to re-advertise the property.
- 9.3 Offers will normally be made to the applicant at the top of the shortlist.
- 9.4 The Council may require applicants to provide further verification of their housing circumstances and/or carry out a property inspection of the applicant's current home prior to making the offer.
- 9.5 Registered Providers may also carry out their own further verification and apply their own criteria before accepting an applicant. Registered Providers may reject an applicant on the top of the shortlist for a particular property if accepting the applicant would conflict with their own policies and procedures.
- 9.6 The Council will arrange accompanied viewings, advise on any non-essential repairs to be completed after the tenancy start date and give a target date for the completion of these repairs.
- 9.7 The Council will offer the successful applicant the option to accept the offer of a property and arrange for them to sign for the tenancy agreement. If an applicant refuses the offer the Council will re-shortlist the existing bidders to allow an offer to be made to the next highest priority applicant.
- 9.8 Non-homeless applicants will generally not be penalised for refusing offers although enquiries will be made if applicants refuse several properties.
- 9.9 **Exceptional need**
- Where the Housing Appeals Panel has agreed that an applicant's housing needs are immediate as well as exceptional, the Council may agree to offer an applicant accommodation ahead of other people on the Housing Register. Section 11 refers.

9.10 Direct allocations

- 9.10.1 Some properties will not be advertised or made available for bidding. The Council will directly allocate these properties where direct allocations are stipulated in the Priority Band or with the authorization of the Housing Services Manager.
- 9.10.2 Direct allocations will be a suitable offer, which as far as possible matches the size and type of property for which the applicant qualifies; and not in an area known to be unsafe for the household. The applicant must give their reasons for refusing. The property will not be held empty while the refusal is reviewed but will be let to another applicant.
- 9.10.3 The offer of properties by direct allocations will take place as set out on the Priority Bands in section 6.
- 9.10.4 In addition direct allocations will be made for bespoke mobility adapted properties which have been newly developed to meet the specific and serious needs of an applicant and for specialist supported housing schemes, including some Extra Care schemes which require applicants to be nominated, assessed and accepted prior to allocation.
- 9.10.5 If an applicant disagrees with the Council's direct letting decision they may request a review. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the review decision they have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel, Section 11 refers.
- 9.10.6 The Council will publish waiting list numbers and lettings outcomes on its website at www.arun.gov.uk/housing/housingregisterlist

10.0 Tenancy Policy

- 10.1 The Allocations Scheme complies with the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Policy adopted in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. The Tenancy Policy sets out arrangements to grant periodic 'lifetime' Secure Tenancies or to grant Fixed term (Flexible) Tenancies.
- 10.2 The tenancy type offered with each allocation complies with the Tenancy Policy and changes to that Policy will be reflected in the tenancy offers made in accordance with this Allocations Scheme.
- 10.3 At the end of a Fixed Term (Flexible) tenancy, the tenant's circumstances will be reviewed, leading to one of the following outcomes:
- a) A further fixed term tenancy of the existing property may be agreed;
 - b) The tenant may be given 12 months' notice that they will need to make arrangements to move to alternative accommodation. Officers will work with the household to help them identify suitable alternative accommodation, either in the private sector or within the social housing stock depending on circumstances.
 - c) An alternative suitable property may be offered where the household requires a different size property or no longer needs a property with adaptations (Priority A5)

For further information please refer to the Council's Tenancy Policy at www.arun.gov.uk

10.4 Ending a joint tenancy when one party to the tenancy leaves

10.4.1 Normally the Council or Registered Provider will grant a joint tenancy to partners applying together for housing. A joint tenancy remains in joint names until one or both joint tenants terminate the tenancy. In the case where one party to the joint tenancy has left the property and has no intention of returning, the Council or Registered Provider may agree to offer a new sole tenancy, either of the current property or of another suitable property, to the remaining partner should they terminate the joint tenancy. Conditions may be attached to granting a new sole tenancy, for example clearing any rent arrears relating to the current joint tenancy.

11.0 Review and Appeal Procedures

11.1 In certain circumstances an applicant may request a review of the Council's decision concerning their housing application. Following a decision, if an applicant remains dissatisfied, they can ask for the decision to be reviewed by the Housing Allocations Appeals Panel.

11.2 Applicants may only request a review in the following circumstances:

- i. Applicant disagrees with the decision to change their joint application to a sole application;
- ii. Applicant disagrees with the decision to exclude, suspend or remove their application;
- iii. Applicant disagrees with the assessment of their housing need, local priority and local connection;
- iv. Applicant disagrees with the assessment of need following a change in their housing circumstances;
- v. Applicant disagrees with the Council's direct allocation to them.

11.3 A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant received notification of the Council's decision. The Council has the discretion to extend the time limit if it considered that this would be reasonable.

11.4 Requests for a review may be made verbally or in writing. Applicants will be asked to explain why they consider the Council's decision to be unreasonable, and to provide any additional evidence as required.

11.5 At the first stage of the review a team leader will reassess the Council's decision by checking the actions taken by the Allocations team. The team leader will respond to the applicant within 2 weeks of the review request. Applicants will be advised if the decision is going to be delayed for any reason.

11.6 If the applicant disagrees with the team leader's reassessment, they can request a second stage review by the Housing Services Manager or another manager who is

senior to the team leader.

- 11.7 The Housing Services Manager, or other manager, will carry out the second stage review and respond to the applicant within 8 weeks of the review request being received. Applicants will be advised if the decision is going to be delayed for any reason.
- 11.8 If the applicant disagrees with the second stage review decision, they have a final right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel which comprises three Arun District Councillors. The panel will be supported by a senior member of staff who has not been involved in the original decision.
- 11.9 A request for an appeal must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant received notification of the Council's second stage review decision. The Council has the discretion to extend the time limit if it considered that this would be reasonable.
- 11.10 Any request for an appeal must be on the basis that the published policy has not been applied correctly to the household's circumstances. If the applicant wishes to challenge the Allocations Scheme itself they are advised to seek independent legal advice.
- 11.11 Requests for an appeal may be made verbally or in writing. Applicants will be asked to explain why they consider the Council has misapplied the published policy. Applicants may present their case to the Panel in person and may be accompanied by a relative or friend but may not be formally represented by a third party.
- 11.12 The Council will aim to carry out an appeal hearing and respond to the applicant within 8 weeks of the appeal request being received. Applicants will be advised if for any reason the decision is going to be delayed
- 11.13 If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the Council's decision they will be advised that they have the right to refer their case to the Local Government Ombudsman service or equivalent and/or to seek specialist advice.

12.0 Additional information

12.1 Consultation

- 12.1.1 The Council recognises the importance of involving, consulting and raising awareness with local communities about housing allocations to reach agreement about an allocation scheme that balances housing needs from both national and local perspectives.
- 12.1.2 The Allocation Scheme 2012 was overseen by a group of 3 Councillors appointed by the Housing and Planning Working Group.
- 12.1.3 Extensive consultation was carried out by a questionnaire sent to stakeholders and a meeting with Registered Providers before the Allocation Scheme was implemented in 2012. Stakeholders' views were reflected in the Allocations Scheme 2012.

12.1.4 Further consultation has been carried out in 2014, by sending the draft amended Allocations Scheme to Registered Providers; to other internal and external partners and stakeholders; to applicants currently on the housing register; to customers living in the private rented sector who have been assisted with a Rent Deposit Bond; and by publication on the Arun District Council website.

12.1.5 A summary of responses to the consultation which lead to changes to the draft amendments will be published.

12.2 Equalities Impact Assessment

12.2.1 An equalities impact assessment was carried out when the Allocations Scheme was implemented in 2012. A further equalities impact assessment has been carried out in 2014. This has been further reviewed and updated in 2017.

12.3 Service Standards

12.3.1 The Council has service standards for the allocations scheme. These are included in the housing service standards agreed for and with Arun Council tenants. The Council will review and publicise its performance against these standards annually.

12.3.2 Arun District Council will aim to:

- Register applications within 14 working days
- Process change in circumstances within 14 working days
- Reply to letters within 10 working days
- Answer phone calls within 30 seconds
- Provide advice to applicants to help them with bidding choices by phone, e-mail and in person
- Wear ID at all times including when visiting
- Deal with all enquiries in a fair and sensitive manner
- Advertise vacant properties for a minimum of 5 days
- Provide reliable information on when a property will be available to let
- Advise you of your right to request a review of a decision in accordance with the details contained within Appendix 3

12.3.3 An applicant is required to:-

- Keep the Council informed of any changes of circumstances
- Ensure that the Council have an up to date address
- Reply to requests for information as quickly as possible
- Treat Arun District Council staff with courtesy
- Give accurate information regarding personal circumstances

12.4 Information for applicants

12.4.1 The Council will provide a free summary of the Allocations Scheme known as the Scheme Users' Guide to any member of the public upon request. The guide is also issued to all applicants upon registration. The Council will provide a full copy of the Allocations scheme on its website and a copy can also be inspected at the Council offices. The Council will provide a full copy of the Allocations Scheme (at a reasonable cost) upon request.

12.4.2 Applicants who are vulnerable and unable to access the internet to view available properties or to make bids, will be sent a freesheet of available properties on request.

12.5 Personal Information

12.5.1 Applicants have the right to see the information held about them and receive a copy of the information held on computer, or on paper file. This is a 'subject access request' for which the Council charges a reasonable administration fee.

12.5.2 Personal information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act and will be subject to appropriate confidentiality.

12.5.3 By submitting an application form to join the Housing Register an applicant consents to the processing of sensitive personal data about themselves. Where an applicant's household includes non-dependent adults, their consent will also be obtained. The Council may disclose information contained in an application and about associated bidding activity and rehousing prospects to agents and/or service providers and may also share this information with other relevant Council services as the law permits.

12.5.4 All information submitted in respect of an application will be verified. Verification may include credit checks, Electoral Register and Council Tax records checks, and other agencies.

12.6 Implementation arrangements

12.6.1 These amendments will come into force with effect from 1 April 2014.

12.6.2 Following approval by Cabinet, all new applications received will be assessed in accordance with the new scheme.

12.6.3 For applicants already on the Housing Register, a review process will be undertaken to consider those affected by the changes to the Allocations Scheme, to contact them to discuss the impact of the changes and to offer further housing advice.

2017

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL – INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**1. What is the name of the service/policy?**

Housing Allocations Scheme

2. Briefly describe the aims of the service/policy

The Housing Allocations Scheme sets out the priorities and procedures for the allocation of affordable (social) housing in the Arun District. The scheme applies to applicants applying to join the housing register for the first time and existing Council or registered provider tenants wanting to move.

3. Are the aims consistent with the Council's Equalities Policy (and on what basis?)

Yes: the Housing Allocation Scheme aims to meet the housing needs of all customers, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability. The Scheme has regard to S.149 Equality Act 2010.

4. Is there any evidence to suggest that this service/policy could have an adverse impact on some groups of people? Use the table to tick:

- (a) Where you think the service/policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within the target groups.
- (b) Where you think the service/policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. it could disadvantage them.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Reason e.g. access/ take-up
Gender	✓		The unborn child of pregnant applicants is added to the housing register application at 6 months gestation (section 4.5.6). Single parents with young children will not be disadvantaged by the Local Priority awarded to those who work, volunteer or undertaking training (section 6.2.3).

2017

Race	✓	✓	Negative: those subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996 may not be allocated social housing (section 5.4.1). Positive: if an applicant is ineligible to join the housing register due to their immigration status, their partner may be able to register as a sole applicant (section 3.5.2).
Disability	✓		Medical, mobility & care needs are met by assessing priority and registering applicants in A1, B1 or C1 (section 4.2). Reasonable preference is given to applicants who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including a disability (section 2.6). Adapted properties are made available for disabled applicants by prioritising the transfer of those who no longer need their adapted property (category A3, section 6.1). Applicants will be assisted with an additional bedroom if needed for a carer or for couples who need separate bedrooms due to medical needs or a disability (section 4.5.4). Applicants with a disability will not be disadvantaged by the Local Priority awarded to those who work, volunteer or undertaking training (section 6.2.3).
Age	✓		Housing needs of applicants with mobility issues are assessed and prioritised in A1, B1 or C1 (section 4.3). Housing for those with mobility needs is advertised and allocated with a Property Qualification Criteria (section 6.4.5). Housing for older residents is advertised and allocated with a Property Qualification Criteria (section 6.4.4). Applicants for sheltered housing may join the housing register at Band C7 where there is no higher housing need (section 6.1.3). Those under the age of 18 may not hold a tenancy, but those who require assistance may hold a licence or a tenancy held in Trust (section 3.4). Homeless 16 & 17 year olds are assisted by a protocol between ADC and West Sussex County Council (to meet the duties of the Children's Act 2004).
Belief	✓	✓	Negative: those subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996 may not be allocated social housing (section 5.4.1). Positive: if an applicant is ineligible to join the housing register due to their immigration status, their partner may be able to register as a sole applicant (section 3.5.2).
Sexuality	✓		Same sex couples may make joint applications and hold joint tenancies (section 3.5).

5. If, in your judgement, the proposed service/policy does have an adverse impact, can that impact be justified? How do you intend to deal with that impact/or lessen that impact?

2017

Race & Religion: The negative impact which may result from not being able to join the housing register is justified because this is a requirement of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996.

Age: The negative impact of under 18s not being able to hold a tenancy is justified because this is set out in Landlord & Tenant law, but alternative arrangements are available, by the use of a licence or a tenancy held in trust. Homeless 16 & 17 year olds are assisted by a separate protocol with WSCC.

Name of manager undertaking the assessment: Judy Knapp

Service Area: Housing

Date completed: February 2017

Requirement for a formal Equalities Impact Assessment: NO

If YES, what is your timetable for completing this?

Who else will you need to be working with to do this work e.g. partners, contractors etc?

AGENDA ITEM NO.6ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 23 MARCH 2017

Information Paper

Subject : Housing and Planning Act 2016

Report by : Brian Pople – Head of Housing

Report date: February 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a brief overview with regard to the elements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 which impacts on the Housing Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Housing and Customers Services Working Group are recommended to note the report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has completed its passage through Parliament and received Royal Assent. The Act provides the necessary legislation for the Government to implement a range of Housing related measures. These include the sale of higher value council homes, starter homes, pay to stay and a range of other measures to promote home ownership and levels of home building.
- 1.2 Although the Act has become law, this does not mean that all of the measures will immediately come into force. In many cases the timeline for change actually being introduced is still unknown.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief summary of the issues in the Act that specifically relate to Council Housing. Other elements of the Act apply to planning for housing and measures likely taken in respect of private landlords.

2.0 Issues affecting or could affect Council Housing

- 2.1 Extension of Right to Buy.

2.1.1 The extended right to buy for tenants in housing association properties. The housing associations will be compensated for that discount offered. Currently a regional pilot scheme is underway involving three housing associations, which will be reviewed in due course. It is proposed that in the longer term, that the discount offered by the housing association will be funded from the sale of high values vacant council houses (see below).

2.2 Sale of Higher Value Vacant Council Houses

2.2.1 It is proposed that for Council's that have retained ownership of their housing stock, that they sell higher value homes as they become vacant. The intention is to use the receipts from these sales to fund the extension of the right to buy to housing association tenants. In addition to the tariff that would be paid to the Government to fund such payments, it is proposed that some of the balance would be left for the Council to build an affordable home. This would in effect be similar arrangements for Right to Buy. Details relating to when such a scheme is to be implemented is yet to be identified, although it is not anticipated to be in the immediate future.

2.3 Mandatory use of fixed term tenancies.

2.3.1 The Act requires that most new local authority tenancies are granted for fixed terms of between two and ten years. This is something that Arun District Council has applied to its tenancies since 2012, when the use of fixed term tenancies was optional. Arun District Council operates both five and ten year fixed term tenancies. The Housing Department will be coming onto the first review of the 5 year fixed term tenancies this year.

The Act also requires that in future successions to secure tenancies, other than when a spouse or civil partner is succeeding, will result in the granting of a fixed term tenancy, rather than a secure tenancy, which would have previously of been the case.

2.4 High income social tenants mandatory rents (Pay to Stay)

2.4.1 It was originally intended that the Act would make it mandatory for Local Authorities to charge increased rents to higher earning tenants. However, the Government have now confirmed that they no longer intend to proceed with this.

3.0 Further Changes

3.1 In the event that further regulations are produced in relation to matters affecting Council Housing, a further update will be prepared in due course.

Background Papers:None

Contact:

Brian Pople
Head of Housing
Extension 37718
 Page 48 of 50

Housing & Customer Services Working Group - 2017/18						
Meeting Date			06-Jul-17	07-Sep-17	02-Nov-17	04-Jan-18
Item	Lead	Origin				
Agenda Prep Timetable						
Send for CMT by 2pm Thurs			01-Jun-17	03-Aug-17	28-Sep-17	30-Nov-17
CMT Tues			06-Jun-17	08-Aug-17	03-Oct-17	05-Dec-17
Draft Reports to Erica by 11am Thurs			08-Jun-17	10-Aug-17	05-Oct-17	07-Dec-17
Agenda Prep Date 3pm			14-Jun-17	16-Aug-17	11-Oct-17	13-Dec-17
Room			ASH	CR2	CR2	ASH
Final Reports to Erica by 11am Mon			20-Jun-17	22-Aug-17	17-Oct-17	19-Dec-17
Despatch Agendas by 2pm Thurs			22-Jun-17	24-Aug-17	19-Oct-17	21-Dec-17
Date of Meeting 6pm			06-Jul-17	07-Sep-17	02-Nov-17	04-Jan-18
Room			CR1	CR1	CR1	CR1

20-Mar-18
25-Jan-18
30-Jan-18
01-Feb-18
07-Feb-18
CR2
13-Feb-18
15-Feb-18
01-Mar-18
CR1