

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Housing & Wellbeing Committee – 20 June 2023
SUBJECT:	Allocation Policy Amendments
LEAD OFFICER:	Jayne Knight, Housing Options Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Carol Birch
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
The Allocation Policy supports the Council's objective of delivering the right homes in the right places by supporting those in our community that most need help, providing a safety net where necessary and working with people and organisations to meet different needs.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
All Local Authorities are required by law to have an up-to-date Allocation Policy which sets out how housing applications are assessed, and how social housing vacancies are allocated.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
None	

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on a number of minor changes required to the Allocation Policy following the configuration of our new case management system: Abrisas.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the changes to the Allocation Policy set out in this report and to give delegated authority to the Group Head of Housing Services to make minor changes to the policy and any amendments necessary to reflect legislative changes.

3.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Allocation Policy approved by Committee in December 2021 is yet to be implemented as it is linked to the configuration and delivery of our new case management system, Abrisas.
- 3.2 During the course of the configuration process, a number of queries have arisen with regard to the Allocation Policy, in particular around the number of reasonable refusals an applicant can make, how adapted properties are allocated and how we deal with management moves within Arun District Council stock.
- 3.3 The Allocation Policy needs updating to reflect these changes.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Demand for social housing in Arun far outstrips the supply and it is therefore critical that we ensure that the right properties are allocated to the right people.
- 4.2 There are four areas of the Allocation Policy which need updating in order to achieve this aim:-

- The number of reasonable refusals an applicant is permitted to make
- How adapted properties are allocated
- The priority for managed moves within our own Housing Stock
- The ability to refuse an application based on the applicant lacking the Mental capacity to hold a tenancy

4.2 Reasonable Refusals

- 4.3 At present, there is no limit on the number of properties that an applicant can reasonably refuse which can raise expectations of what is realistically available. This also creates an additional administration burden on the service which can be challenging. The proposal is that should an applicant refuse two reasonable offers of accommodation, their application can be reviewed and may be removed from the housing register. Applicants will be able to submit supporting evidence as to why they are refusing a property, it will be for the Housing Options Manager to determine whether or not the refusal is reasonable. Applicants will have the right to request a review of any decision to remove their application from the register.
- 4.4 It should be noted that we operate a Choice Based Lettings system and that the applicant places bids on properties themselves. The only occasion that Officers may place bids on behalf of applicants is when they are unable to do so themselves, or they are homeless and in temporary accommodation and have not been placing bids themselves.

4.5 Adapted Properties

4.6 We want to ensure that adapted properties are allocated to people who need adaptations. In order to achieve this, the shortlisting process needs to be changed to allow preference to be given to those applicants who need adapted properties. Other applicants will still be able to apply, however the shortlisting process will put applicants needing those adaptations at the top of the shortlist.

4.7 Managed Moves

The policy does not currently give existing tenants the opportunity to move unless they have a housing need. There may be occasions where a tenant needs to move to a property of the same type and size, even though they don't have a housing need. This would need to be agreed by the Housing Options Manager.

4.8 Exclusion from the register for applicants lacking the mental capacity to hold a tenancy

To ensure that applicants who do not have the ability to understand their tenancy rights or obligations and who would not manage a tenancy in general needs setting. Applicants lacking the capacity to hold a tenancy shall be referred to West Sussex County Council Adult Social Care team for assistance.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 None required

6.0 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 To approve the recommended changes to the Allocation Policy

6.2 To not approve the changes. However, this would mean that the council's housing stock, and the stock of our registered provider partners would not be allocated in the fairest way possible.

7.0 COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE & SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 None

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 None

9.0 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 None

10.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 None

11.0 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 None

12.0 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 None

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 None

14.0 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 None

15.0 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 None

16.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 None

17.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 None

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: