

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO HOUSING & WELLBEING COMMITTEE ON 2 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT

SUBJECT:	Housing Allocations Policy 2022
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REPORT AUTHOR:	Claire Dyke, Housing Options Manager Satnam Kaur, Group Head of Residential Services
DATE:	2 December 2021
EXTN:	37637
AREA:	Residential Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Every local housing authority must publish a Housing Allocations Policy to explain how it prioritises applicants and its procedures for allocating housing. All allocations must be made in strict accordance with the published scheme. (Housing Act 1996, section 166A(1) and (14))

The current Housing Allocation Policy has not been fully reviewed since 2012. This report seeks approval for the adoption and implementation of the Council's revised Housing Allocation Policy (HAP) 2022.

The HAP sets out the criteria for:

- i. who can apply for housing
- ii. how housing register applications are assessed and prioritised
- iii. how homes are allocated
- iv. applicant choice and preference

Implementation for the new policy is proposed for the autumn of 2022 when the new IT Housing Management System is mobilised in line with the approved policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Residential & Wellbeing Committee:

- a) approves the revised Housing Allocation Policy 2022
- b) gives delegated authority to the Group Head of Residential Services to make minor changes to the policy and any amendments necessary to reflect legislative changes

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The current Housing Allocations Policy has not been fully reviewed since 2012, other than to make minor amendments to comply with changes in legislation. A full review of the policy has been undertaken, with residents and key stakeholders consulted over the summer of 2021.
- 1.2 The review has enabled us to consider the impact Covid has had on the housing market and the economy, including housing supply pressures and homelessness. This has helped to refine the policy and the opportunity to ensure that the finite resource of social housing is helping those in greatest need and making the best use of stock.
- 1.3 In reviewing the existing policy, the service has engaged with key stakeholders and customers, regarding key service issues and trends identified during the life of the policy, this has been an extensive process with several opportunities for feedback to be provided.
- 1.4 There are a number of changes to the policy which are set out in Appendix 1 - Principal Changes to the Housing Allocation Policy.
- 1.5 The HAP 2022 will go live in autumn 2022 following configuration and roll out of the new IT Housing Management System in Residential Services.
- 1.6 For applicants already on the housing register, a re-registration process will take place during the spring 2022. This process will re-assess anyone wishing to remain on the housing register and give them details about how the new policy. Staff will be available to discuss the changes and to offer further housing advice.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

- 2.1 To adopt and implement the revised Housing Allocations Policy 2022 effective on the date the new housing department's ICT system is delivered (anticipated autumn 2022).

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 To adopt the Housing Allocation Policy 2022
- 3.2 Not to adopt the policy. This is not considered a feasible option. The option not to review and develop a revised Housing Allocations Policy was dismissed due to changes in legislation and associated statutory guidance and the requirement to ensure that our policies reflect these.

4. CONSULTATION:		
4.1 The Council recognises the importance of involving, consulting, and raising awareness with local communities about housing allocations to reach agreement about an allocations policy that balances housing needs from both national and local perspectives. Consultation took place from the 23 August 2021 to the 1 October 2021 the results of which have been considered and included in the revised policy.		
	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	✓	
Relevant District Ward Councillors	✓	
Other groups/persons (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Register Applicants • Registered Provider Partners • Staff within Residential Services 	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		✓
Legal		✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:
6.1 Financial - there are no identified financial implications for the service through implementation of the new policy.
6.2 Legal – The Council must have a housing allocations scheme (Housing Allocations Policy) in accordance with Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (section 166A). The Housing Allocations Policy must include the Council’s policy on offering people choice of housing and to express a preference (a statement of choice). There is a legal requirement to consult on major changes to the Housing Allocations Policy. Public consultation on the Council’s proposed revised Housing Allocations Policy 2022 has been completed

6.3 It is essential that the Housing Allocations Policy is reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is updated in line with legislation, regulation guidance, case law and Council priorities.

7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:

7.1 To ensure that the Council has a Housing Allocations Scheme that meets the legal requirements as set out in Part IV of the Housing Act 1996 and reflects local priorities.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Principal Changes to the Allocations Policy

Appendix 2 – Draft Housing Allocation Policy 2022