

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	Council Housing Allocations Policy – Homelessness Points Adjustment and Small Wording Change

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Council Housing Allocations Policy – Homelessness Points Adjustment and Small Wording Change

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Members of small changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy that relates to the points level awarded to those applicants that are accepted for rehousing under homelessness legislation and the removal of the word "immoral" from section 8.10 of the same policy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note an amendment to the Homeless points level in the Housing Allocations policy and the removal of the word "immoral" from Section 8.10 of the same policy.
- 2.2 Members are asked to note the background to the amendments.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council operates a Group and Points Allocations Policy, which has been operational since its introduction in July 2007 following a major review of the previous policy. Subsequent changes have been made to the policy over the last few years. The most recent changes are outlined in a report to Cabinet dated March 2019. This report was given approval with an implementation date of the 1st May 2019.
- 3.2 As part of the most recent review, the Housing Allocations Project Group were tasked with a data modelling exercise that aimed to ensure that those in most housing need were given priority on our housing list which reflected their needs and, in addition, those that have been assessed as having a

homelessness need for the longest period of time would be placed appropriately by receiving a priority points level that recognised this.

3.3 The findings of the data modelling exercise formed part of the March 19 Cabinet report as follows : -

3.14 The revised policy will introduce a flat rate of points for all applicants accepted for housing under homelessness legislation. Applications would receive the same number of points and be offered housing ordered by the date of their homelessness application. This would prevent newer applications being housed ahead of older applications.

3.15 The use of Temporary Tenancy Points will be removed as a result of the introduction of the flat rate of points and the total points level for all applications accepted under homelessness legislation will be capped at 100 points.

3.4 Prior to the Housing Allocations policy 'go live' date of the 1st May 2019, there has been ongoing testing of the Council's housing management system to ensure a smooth transition to the new policy position.

3.5 This testing has highlighted that the one hundred points level cap suggested previously for applications accepted under homelessness legislation can affect other transfer & general needs applications that also have a combination of several other housing needs factors – resulting in similar higher points levels being capped.

3.6 There are several options to resolve this issue, however, the simplest policy and operational response is to raise the homelessness maximum cap level to two hundred points. This action still retains the original objectives set out in paragraph 3.2 and removes the need for manual adjustments to be carried out by staff.

3.7 This action is not at odds with the consultation exercise where those consulted in the main supported a flat rate of points for homeless applicants (the points level was not indicated).

3.8 Following adverse press and social media coverage, the Allocations Programme Board have requested that the word "immoral" is removed from the Allocations Policy under Section 8.10 given the subjectivity of the word and that it is only possible to take legal action for illegal purposes (not immoral).

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Allocation outcomes will remain unaffected by the change in the points level for applications that are accepted under homelessness legislation and the removal of the word "immoral" under Section 8.10.

4.2 The Council can be satisfied that the new Housing Allocations Policy remains compliant with legal requirements and is delivering good outcomes for housing applicants most in need and those experiencing homelessness

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Cabinet Report - Housing Allocations Policy – March 2019

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