

REVIEW OF DERBY ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Report of the Head Housing Options

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress that is being made to carry out a review of the Derby Allocations Policy. The Allocations policy is a key document for Derby City Council and delivered by Derby Homes.
- 1.2 The existing policy has been in place since March 2013. During its existence the policy has had many amendments added due to legislative changes. Most recently an amendment was implemented in July 2018 to incorporate new government legislation of the Homeless Reduction Act.
- 1.3 The existing policy is written in a format set for both the customer and officers whom are delivering services aligned to the policy. With the additions of new legislation/amendments over its lifetime it has made the document cumbersome to read from a customer point of view and complex to use as officers.
- 1.4 Derby Homefinder is a choice based letting system that social landlords/ registered providers (RPs) within Derby are signed up to. Derby Homes and the RPs use Homefinder to advertise all their available stock with allocations compliant with the Allocations policy.
- 1.5 To ensure the review of the AllocationS policy is effective and successful specialist review sessions have been delivered with Homefinder and key partners/stakeholder to establish all policy review needs are captured.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the details and progress of the review taking place to ensure the Allocations policy is relevant and fit for purpose.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure the Allocations Policy allows eligible and qualifying customers to access available social housing effectively in Derby. Ensuring that the policy best meets the needs and priorities of the city to ensure we are able to prioritise available housing to those with the highest need.
- 3.2 To ensure all Homefinder allocations within Derby are compliant with the policy and compliant with all statutory regulations as registered providers.

4. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Derby Homes manages Derby Homefinder, the choice based letting system, on behalf of all the registered partners whom allocate social housing properties within Derby.
- 4.2 Specialist review sessions have been carried out involving all Homefinder partners. Alongside this we have worked closely with key stakeholders internal and external from within Derby to capture their experiences both positive and negative in using the Allocations policy.
- 4.3 These detailed review sessions have been vital in shaping the revised Allocations Policy. Sessions included partners such as Social Services, Housing Options, Housing Management, Derby Homes Operational Board and Customer Voice, Police, Homelessness Charities, Health, Housing Strategy and many other key partners.
- 4.4 During review sessions we spoke in detail of how the Allocations policy currently works and the impact it has with stakeholders in delivering their services and ultimately the impact on their customer base.
- 4.5 In carrying out this review we have utilised MHCLG produced guidance documents to ensure the policy will enable customers to seamlessly access housing within Derby.
- 4.6 Subject to full consultation, this review has allowed a change to how we place customers in 'Bands' who are identified as having a housing need whilst also addressing DCC pressures. This will be achieved by the introduction of a 'Corporate Needs Band' which will give the greatest priority to housing for groups such as Foster Carers/Adopters, move on from Supported Accommodation, Care leavers, Severe Medical, Severely Overcrowded & those who are Significantly under-occupying.
- 4.7 The introduction of a new Banding will require an amendment to the Homefinder website/IT system. This work is programmed in and we are working with our IT Projects team and Capita Housing to deliver the required amendments.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To further amend the existing Allocations policy. This option would have made the already highly amended policy more complicated for customers and officers to use.
- 5.2 The implications of not amending the Allocations policy and introducing a third band would mean we are not addressing the current housing pressures we face. The introduction of a third band ensures we are aligned with Derby City Council's corporate priorities for the city, focusing on customers who are in the greatest need for housing, ensuring the best usage of our stock and the specialist services available within the city.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Derby Allocations policy is a key statutory document for the city and therefore requires a full city consultation to be carried out before final approval by the Council's Cabinet.
- 6.2 Consultation will be conducted from early 2020 on the Council's website for a period of 8 weeks in line with the Council's consultation commitment 'Your City Your Say' <https://www.derby.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations/> .

7. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 The reviewed Allocations policy has been assessed by the Council. This has confirmed that the review of the existing policy and additional context has not affected any legal issues. The Council's Legal department is satisfied that this reviewed policy is fully compliant and fit for the purpose written

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Financial and Business Plan
Council
Health & Safety
Risk
Equalities Impact Assessment
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None