

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee
DATE	26 August 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Housing Allocation Policy
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/183
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Jacqui McKenzie
REPORT AUTHOR	Athelstan Croft
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the refreshed Housing Allocations Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the refreshed Housing Allocations Policy as detailed in Appendix 1; and
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to implement the revised Housing Allocations Policy.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As a social housing provider, the council is required to comply with the legislative and regulatory framework governing the allocation of social rented housing. As such, the council has a duty to make, and publish, a Housing Allocations Policy detailing how the allocation of homes, transfers, and exchanges will be allocated, and must clearly set out how it will determine an applicant's priority for housing.
- 3.2 The allocation of housing stock is an essential service provided by the Housing cluster, the aim being to ensure that homes are allocated to those households with the greatest need ensuring fairness and alignment to the Council's statutory duties.
- 3.3 In the financial year 2024/25 the council received 4,608 applications for housing and approximately 10,000 requests for advice and assistance relating to applying for housing. During the same period, 5,235 offers of accommodation to 3,312 households were made, resulting in the creation of

2,456 tenancies. The introduction of the Choice Based Lettings approach in 2023 has led to an increase in applications with received applications rising from 3,806 in 2021/22, to 4,879 in 2022/23, rising to 4,968 in 2024/25. The Housing Online portal has received 247,980 bids from applicants for advertised properties since the introduction of Choice Based Lettings in July 2023.

- 3.4 The purpose of the policy is to enable the service to deliver a person-centred approach to housing allocation, while ensuring full compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework. The current Housing Allocations Policy was approved by Communities, Housing & Public Protection committee in March 2023, prior to the commencement of the Choice Based Lettings approach to advertising and letting council properties. In the intervening period, software updates, operational updates, audit recommendations, and service demands have required the policy to be reviewed to meet current practice and prioritise new service demands.
- 3.6 The table below summarises the aspects of the policy that have been updated, and the rationale for the proposed changes.

Housing Allocations Policy - Sections Updated	Rationale For Change
13.4 Checks Carried Out On An Application	Legislative change to reduce tenancy checks to tenancies held within the past 3 years as per Scottish Government guidance.
13.7 Exceptions to the bedroom requirement rules	The option of applying for accommodation one bedroom size smaller than the assessed requirement has been added for all households replacing the previous rule allowing this only for households in two bedroom or smaller accommodation applying for four bedroom properties. This is to support households who are in an overcrowded position who feel that this would benefit their current situation.
13.9 How We Allocate Housing Offer Restrictions	Audit recommendation to update the section to better reflect operational practice.
13.10 Offering A Property	Audit recommendation to update the section with relevant timescales to better reflect operational practice.
13.15 Other Allocation Issues and Information	Operational change to add Section 5 referrals to ensure referrals to Registered Social Landlords are included in this section and better reflect operational practice.
Appendix 5 Housing With Support Categories	Additional "Social Need" category added to increase accessibility of sheltered housing to those of a suitable age who wish to apply.
Appendix 6 Delegated Powers	Discretionary Power 9 - Updated to reflect operational change and best practice in relation to requests for transfers of tenancies. This will allow, in appropriate circumstances, requests for the

	occupancy agreements, of households decanted to alternative accommodation, to be converted to Scottish Secure Tenancies providing an immediate permanent housing solution for displaced households.
Appendix 6 Delegated Powers	Discretionary Power 27 - Updated to also include Repairing Standard Enforcement Order and Works Notice to reflect legislative changes introduced under The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Transfer of Functions of the Private Rented Housing Committees) Regulations 2016, following a recent case in the city involving such an order.
Appendix 6 Delegated Powers	Discretionary Power 35 - Additional discretionary power requested to increase the priority of applicants placed in temporary accommodation classed as unsuitable within the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order. Households placed in such accommodation for a period of more than 7 nights are deemed to have breached the order, opening the possibility for legal challenge to the council. The ability to increase priority for these applications will allow services to better manage temporary accommodation demand and reduce the potential for legal challenge.

- 3.7 Implementation will be programmed from 31st September 2025 to allow time for the required document and system updates, staff briefings and scheduling.
- 3.8 The implementation of these proposed changes will ensure the Council remains compliant with evolving legislative requirements. Operationally, these changes are designed to reflect best practice, streamline the management of tenancy transfers and temporary accommodation, and accommodate increased demand while reducing risks associated with non-compliance such as breaches of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order. From an audit perspective, the proposals will facilitate transparent record-keeping and procedural consistency, supporting accountability in decision-making and helping to demonstrate robust governance.
- 3.9 More widely work to further develop assurance and governance across the Housing Cluster has been progressed with the recent development and approval of the Housing Services Quality Improvement Framework. One of the key purposes of this framework being to ensure that everyone who is involved is clear about their responsibilities and accountabilities for quality control, quality assurance and improvement.
- 3.10 Members are recommended to approve the refreshed Allocations Policy at Appendix 1.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Council are required to have an allocations policy in terms of s.21 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by s. 155 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.'

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	The Housing Allocations Policy is central to delivering the operational aims relating to the allocation of council stock as prescribed in legislation and the Local Housing Strategy. Failure to implement the Housing Allocation Policy appropriately would pose a strategic risk.	Internal reporting and auditing is in place to ensure that the policy is operating as expected in relation to the council's statutory duties and strategic aims.	L	Yes
Compliance	Local Authorities have a duty to	The Housing Allocation Policy has been produced and	L	Yes

	<p>make and publish rules covering the priority of allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges s (section 21 of the 1987 Act, as amended by section 155 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and the 2001 Act). The council's Housing Allocation Policy must comply with the legislative framework set out in the Social housing allocations legal framework: statutory guidance for social landlords.</p>	<p>will be published on the Council's website once approved and implemented. Procedures will be updated to reflect any updates or changes. Service monitoring and auditing will be carried out to ensure that the policy is enacted and performing to comply with guidance.</p>		
Operational	<p>The Housing Allocation Policy is vital to the administration of the council's housing lists, appropriate allocation of properties, and ensuring operational compliance with the council's statutory duties</p>	<p>Internal auditing and monitoring is in place to ensure that the policy is operating appropriately.</p>	L	Yes

	to homeless households.			
Financial	The Housing Allocation Policy will ensure that council properties can be allocated to suitable applicants in a timely manner reducing void rental loss and the time applicants remain in unsuitable accommodation across the city.	Internal auditing and monitoring is in place to ensure that the policy is operating appropriately to minimise financial risks.	L	Yes
Reputational	The Housing Allocation Policy governs the allocation of all council properties. Failure to carry out this service as described in the policy will prevent the council from meeting its statutory duties to homeless households and demonstrate to applicants and other interested parties that the process is transparent and fair.	Internal auditing and monitoring is in place to ensure that the policy is operating appropriately.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 9 - 10% fewer adults (over 18) charged with more than one offence by 2026. Specifically 9.2 - Reduce by 90% the number of people released from prison in to Aberdeen City without suitable accommodation by 2026, and 9.10 - Increase by 15% the reports of domestic abuse to Police Scotland by 2026. By prioritising the rehousing of people leaving prison without a home and those forced to leave their home due to domestic abuse.</p> <p>Through the Prison Liaison Officer role, it is hoped that utilisation of the priority afforded to people leaving prison will result in the majority entering permanent accommodation directly on release. Similarly, the priority afforded to applicants affected by domestic abuse should encourage them to seek assistance and facilitate better reporting of incidents to Police Scotland.</p> <p>The proposals in the report broadly support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 12. "Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City by facilitating the allocation of council and housing association properties to homeless applicants in a timely manner. By prioritising homeless applicants the policy seeks to make periods of homelessness as brief as possible. Furthermore, by facilitating the allocation of suitable properties the policy seeks to find long term housing solutions which also make homelessness less likely to recur.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The proposals within this report support the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy by ensuring homes that are owned by Aberdeen City Council are allocated in a fair way.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [The Legal Framework For Social Housing Allocations Statutory Guidance For Social Landlords Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014.](#)
- 10.2 [Social housing allocations in Scotland: practice guide.](#)
- 10.3 [Housing Allocation Policy 2023.](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – [Housing Allocations Policy.](#)

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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