

Housing Allocations Policy – informal Member consultation 4 February 2021

Please find below a summary of the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy. These are the key proposals that Members can shape.

Proposed change	Reason for change	Current policy
1. Local connection Applicant resident 6 out of last 12 months <u>or</u> 3 out of last 5 years, or family members resident last 5 years	Definition in Homeless Reduction Act – cannot discharge some homeless duties currently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant resident 2 out of last 5 years • Family members resident last 3 years
2. Unacceptable behaviour – housing related debt Those with more than £250 housing debt have to set up payment arrangement for 12 weeks to access Register	Personal responsibility and accountability – improved behaviour of prospective tenants	More than 8 weeks rent owed to be repaid for 13 weeks
3. Income threshold increased £49,998 - one third of 'average lower quartile housing sale price' for the district in October 2020.	Number of applicants on Register is not a true reflection of housing need in district. Developers have raised concern about housing need in the district based on current figures.	Current threshold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single people £24,628 gross • other households £43,098 gross
4. Private rented tenants recognised Tenants on Assured Shorthold Tenancies awarded lowest level of priority because of tenancy type.	6 month tenancies. Low number of applicants on Register - not a true reflection of housing need in district	Not able to access Register unless in housing need.
5. Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent housing cases - one offer of accommodation only. Officers select locations and property types. • Reduced priority for those homeless/threatened with homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants selective over property type/location resulting in unnecessary homelessness declarations. • Register is currently top heavy with homeless cases. Myth that you need to be homeless to be housed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 offers made, applicant chooses location and property type • High priority.
6. Unborn children included Unborn children considered once 26 weeks pregnant	Reduces demand on 1 bed properties and unnecessary voids	Unborn children not currently considered
7. Adapted properties Let to disabled household that needs the adaptations	Correct use of adapted properties – best use of stock	Let to highest housing need
8. New developments Properties let to a mixture of bands 1 and 2	To achieve sustainable developments and shape the Place	Let to high band (band 1) only
9. Management category Increased priority to existing social housing tenants in certain circumstances e.g. no longer need adaptations	Better use of stock – two households off the Register	Not in current policy
10. Panel membership Membership of SHDC Officers and Registered Providers with housing in the district	More transparent approach	SHDC Officer membership only

Vikki Cherry, Housing Services Manager. 5 January 2021