



Leicester  
City Council

## **MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE: MONDAY, 11 MARCH 2019**

**TIME: 5:30 pm**

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01 - City Hall, 115 Charles Street,  
Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

### **Members of the Scrutiny Commission**

Councillor Westley (Chair)

Councillor Alfonso (Vice Chair)

Councillors Aqbany, Byrne, Corrall, Joshi, Newcombe and Willmott

Members of the Scrutiny Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

#### **Officer contacts:**

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## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **AGENDA**

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 7 January 2019 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

#### **5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

#### **6. RENT ARREARS PROGRESS REPORT - OCTOBER 2018 TO DECEMBER 2018 [Appendix A](#)**

The Director of Housing submits a report to inform Members of the Scrutiny Commission of progress over the third quarter from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Members are asked to note the report.

#### **7. HOUSING REGISTER REVIEW PHASE 3 [Appendix B](#)**

The Director of Housing submits a report which seeks feedback from the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the proposals and operational changes

outlined in the report.

**8. WORK PROGRAMME**

**Appendix C**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

**9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

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## **Rent Arrears Progress Report**

**October 2018 to December 2018**

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly  
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

## Useful information

Ward(s) affected: ALL

Report author: Zenab Valli

Author contact details: [Zenab.valli@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Zenab.valli@leicester.gov.uk) Ext 37 3573

Report version number: V1a

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Scrutiny Commission the rent arrears progress for quarter 3 which covers period, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The cash amount owing at week ending 30<sup>th</sup> December 2018 was **£1,504,978**, this is **2.9% lower** than at the same point in the previous financial year – see 3.1, Table 1.
- 2.2 The proportion of rent collected between April to December 2018 was **99.69%**, this is in line with achieving the set target for year end.
- 2.3 Between April 2018 and December 2018 a total **£138,222** was paid by Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) for all Council tenants. From this figure a total of £57,138 was paid to support those tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax. A total of £5,067 was paid to support LA tenants in receipt of Universal Credit. The team are prioritising their focus on utilising the DHP funds for 2018/19, to help sustain tenancies for those in rent arrears.
- 2.4 Evictions are carried out as a last resort and during quarter 3 there were a total of 7 evictions that took place due to non-payment of rent. This figure is **lower** in comparison to the same point last year (2017/18) where the figure was 11.
- 2.5 Universal Credit Full Service was introduced on 13th June 2018. By the end of Quarter 3 (30<sup>th</sup> December 2018) a total number of **1,270** tenants had made a new claim for Universal Credit and the total value of arrears at the end of quarter 3 was **£265,988**.
- 2.6 The Rent Management Advisors have been supporting vulnerable tenants, or those with complex needs who are claiming Universal Credit. By the end of quarter 3 a total of **544** council tenants were supported with their Universal Credit claim. Majority of the tenants only required short-term support and generalist advice.
- 2.7 The number of tenants in serious debt, (owing more than 7 weeks rent) was **1412**, this is higher by 23% in comparison to the same point last year – see 3.3, Table 2

### 3. REPORT

#### Rent Arrears

- 3.1 Rent arrears at the end of the third quarter (30<sup>th</sup> December 2018) and previous financial years were:

**Table 1. Quarterly Arrears**

Q3 Period (Oct to Dec)	Arrears at End of Quarter 3
2014/15	£1,300,041
2015/16	£1,129,210
2016/17	£1,191,775
2017/18	£1,549,990
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>£1,504,978*</b>

\* All payments collected up to week ending 30<sup>th</sup> December 2018 are included.

- 3.2 The rent arrears decreased by **2.9%** in comparison to the same point in the previous year (2017/18). The increased difference between the last 2 years and previous years is a result of an awkward month end resulting in incoming direct debit payments not being included within quarter 3.

#### Number of Cases

- 3.3 The number of tenants with rent arrears owing 7 weeks or more net rent is shown in tables 2 below:

**Table 2. Breakdown of Arrears Cases by quarter end 2018-19**

Q3 Period (Oct to Dec)	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net
2014/15	1,617
2015/16	1,839
2016/17	1,124
2017/18	1,148
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>1,412</b>

N.B. Where no net rent is payable (i.e. on full benefit), full rent has been used as a default value to calculate number of weeks owing)

- 3.4 The number of cases owing 7 weeks or more (net rent) is higher by **23%** over the previous year's quarter end figure (2017/18). The increase is reflecting Universal Credit caseloads and delays in council receiving Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) from the DWP due to delays of up to 8 weeks.

#### Arrears per Tenancy

- 3.5 The total arrears divided by the total number of occupied council tenancies are shown below:

**Table 3. Average debt by quarter end - 2018/19**

Q3 Period (Oct to Dec)	Average Debt
2014/15	£61.02
2015/16	£53.35
2016/17	£57.42
2017/18	£75.88
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>£74.19</b>

- 3.6 Tables 3 shows that the average debt decreased by **2%** in comparison to the same point last year. This figure is variable depending on the number of occupied properties at any given time and the figure is likely to increase due to the diminishing stock numbers through the Right to Buy Scheme.

**Top 500 Arrears Cases (by value)**

- 3.7 Tables 4 (below) shows the top 500 accounts with highest arrears and total value during Quarter 1, 2 and 3, regardless of tenants payment methods.

**Table 4 Top 500 arrears cases by quarter end - 2018/19**

Quarter	Top 500 Arrears	Highest case	Lowest case	Average	Total Value
Quarter 1 2018/19	500	£3,551	£614	£952	£475,859
Quarter 2 2018/19	500	£2,826	£658	£1032	£515,835
Quarter 3 2018/19	500	£3,616	£631	£1021	£510,623

- 3.8 The table shows a **1%** decrease of the total value of arrears in comparison to quarter 2 figures but an increase of **7%** from quarter 1 figures. This is in line with the increase seen in table 2 (over 7 weeks net rent) and reflects on the impact and delay of Universal Credit payments. Higher debt cases are generally more complex to manage and require intensive support from the team to help maximise the rent collection.

**Impact of Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS)**

- 3.9 Universal Credit Full Service was introduced on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018. By the end of quarter 3 (30<sup>th</sup> December 2018) a total number of **1,270** council tenants made a new claim under the new system which equates to **6.26%** of all current council tenants.



- 3.10 At the end of quarter 3 a total of **72.36%** of tenants (919 out of 1,270) were in rent arrears however, a total **75.2%** (955 out of 1,270) already had pre-existing rent arrears prior to making the new UC claim. In comparison a total of **5,382** tenants are in arrears that are not claiming UC which equates to almost **26.53%** of all current council tenants.
- 3.11 The total value of rent arrears at the end of quarter 3 were **£265,988** and the average arrears per case equates to **£209** for those in receipt of Universal Credit.
- 3.12 The team are working collaboratively with the Department of Works & Pensions and Work coaches from the local Job Centre Plus to minimise any impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears and continue to make suggestions to improve the way APA's are paid to landlords.
- 3.13 The DWP granted the council 'Trusted Partner' status which gives access to their Landlord Portal IT system. This has meant the Income Management Team can verify housing costs quickly to prevent delays in UC claims being assessed. The Trusted Partner status also allows the council to apply for Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA's) for vulnerable people who may struggle to pay their rent and any arrears themselves.
- 3.14 To help mitigate this risk of Universal Credit 4 new Officers were recruited in May 2018 called Rent Management Advisors. Their role is to support vulnerable tenants, or those with complex needs who are claiming Universal Credit. They have been helping tenants to set up e-mail accounts, supporting people to make and manage their UC claims, promoting and helping to set up Clockwise Rent Payment Accounts which ensures rent is paid on time and encouraging people to attend digital learning courses.
- 3.15 By the end of quarter 3 the Rent Management Advisors had received a total of **544** referrals and most of these tenants have only required general advice or short-term support whilst they make their initial UC claim. Around **98** had been identified as requiring more long-term support, which the officers are providing.
- 3.16 In June we started a 3-month pilot of co-locating Income Management Team Officers in the 3 Job Centre Plus sites (JCP). This is so we can meet with our tenants at the same time they have their first meeting with their work coach. We use this opportunity to advice on their responsibility to pay their rent themselves and establish whether they need any support to manage their claim, for which a referral to a Rent Management Advisor is made. There has been some positive feedback from staff working as part of co-location.
- 3.17 Around **613** Universal Credit claimants have been seen by Income Management Officers since the start of co-location (June 2018) and **44%** of these were council tenants. Other enquiries have included those from JCP staff (work coach), private sector and housing association tenants. In these circumstances our officers have provided housing related advice or signposted to other services available.

- 3.18 The pilot is currently being reviewed and evaluated to determine if co-location is proving effective and productive for the council and to help decide on the longevity of co-location.
- 3.19 Overall the key risks to the council with the introduction of Universal Credit Full Service is the potential increase in rent arrears, as majority of tenants will be responsible for paying the rent themselves. From the total number of people claiming UC a higher proportion of tenants are in arrears which relate to the initial assessment period of claims and delay in the payment of APA's. The team are supporting those tenants in arrears by making affordable repayment agreements for the outstanding debt and continually seeking to network with the DWP to mitigate the risks of increased arrears.

### **Proportion of Rent Collected**

- 3.20 The Income management team have a key performance management target to ensure the proportion of rent collected at the end of the financial year is 99%. The proportion of rent collected between April to December 2018 was **99.69%**, which is in line with achieving the set target for year end.

### **Evictions**

- 3.21 Evictions remain at a relatively low level compared to earlier years and this is despite the economic difficulties experienced over the period and ongoing welfare reform challenges. Management scrutinise all potential eviction cases to ensure that all avenues of maximising tenant income and sustaining tenancy have been explored. This includes ensuring that any vulnerability has been identified and the necessary referrals to supporting agencies are considered well in advance of any eviction process being followed. The eviction route is pursued as an ultimate last resort and after all efforts to sustain tenancy has been demonstrated and exhausted.
- 3.22 During quarter 3 there were **7** evictions carried out for non-payment as a very last resort and this is lower, than at the same point last year (2017/18) where the figure was 11.
- 3.23 Of the 7 evictions, 1 was a family case and 6 were single people.
- 3.24 From the 7 evictions 6 had no Housing Benefit (HB) in payment prior to the eviction so Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) was not applicable and 1 has their application refused due to regulations not allowing the non-dependant deductions to be covered by DHP.
- 3.25 Prior to taking eviction action the team work closely with Social Care & Health (SCH) department to help sustain tenancies. From the 7 evictions, 5 tenants were not known to the Adult Social Care (ASC) team, 2 tenants had previous involvement with the Children and Young People Services (CYPS) and ASC teams.

### **DHP's (Discretionary Housing Payment)**

3.26 Between April 2018 and December 2018 a total **£138,222** was paid by Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) for all Council tenants. From this figure a total of **£57,138** was paid to support those tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax. A total of **24** council tenants in receipt of Universal Credit were supported by DHP with the total value of **£5,067** in payments being awarded. Currently the team are prioritising their focus on utilising the DHP funds for 2018/19, to help sustain tenancies for those in rent arrears.

### **5. REPORT AUTHOR**

4.1 Zenab Valli, Income Collection Manager – Tel 37 3573



# Appendix B

## **Housing Scrutiny Commission**

11<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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### **Housing Register Review Phase 3**

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors:

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■ Report version number: V1

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Housing Act 1996 section 166A(3) requires that an allocations policy must be framed to give reasonable preference to certain categories of people.
- 1.2 We are under a duty to carry out regular reviews of the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure it is legally compliant and is fit for purpose and primarily addresses those in the most housing need.
- 1.3 The last major review of the Housing Allocations Policy was undertaken in June 2016 which removed households from the Housing Register who were suitably housed or had a low housing need to move.
- 1.4 Phase 3 of the review will consider the following:
  - A review of the homelessness priorities
  - A review of the different levels of overcrowding on the Housing Register
  - A review of the local connection policy regarding victims of domestic abuse
  - Compliance with forthcoming guidance on members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their families.
  - A review of households needing wheelchair accessible accommodation and initiatives to assist them to resolve their needs
  - A review of existing Insecure Accommodation priority applicants
  - A review of existing households with Band 1 priorities
- 1.5 The reviews will incorporate recommendations for proposed changes to give greater preference to people with the most housing need who do not have the resources to explore other housing options.
- 1.6 The Housing Options Service have a duty to provide advice and assistance to all citizens of Leicester in relation to the housing options available to them, including advice about the private rented sector.
- 1.7 This report has been to Assistant Mayor Briefing on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and City Mayor Briefing on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019, at which point permission was granted to consult on the proposals.
- 1.8 Consultation shall now be undertaken with Registered Providers of social housing within the District, and with Housing Scrutiny Commission on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

**Purpose of report:**

To seek feedback from the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the proposals and operational changes outlined in this report.

It is proposed:

- To give specified households who are owed a Homelessness Prevention or Relief duty a time-limited Band 1 priority.
- To give households who are overcrowded the appropriate level of priority for their overcrowding e.g. Statutory Overcrowding Band 1.
- To give victims of domestic abuse that have fled to a refuge (or other temporary accommodation) in the city from another local authority area, an exemption from the local connection criteria and award a relevant banding priority, which may reduce the incentive for victims to seek homelessness assistance.
- To make changes to the policy in line with forthcoming guidance on members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their families.

In addition, internally an operational review of the following will be undertaken:

- To carry out a detailed review of all cases currently registered who require fully wheelchair accessible accommodation and to look to develop an appropriate plan to give the best chance of success.
- To build up a profile of existing wheelchair adapted accommodation in the city.
- To review all remaining households in the Insecure Accommodation category.
- To implement a regular review process for those households with Band 1 priorities.

**2. Background, and Statistics from the Housing Register**

- 2.1 Social Housing is a dwindling resource, and it is now more important than ever for Councils to regularly review their Housing Allocations Policies to ensure it is relevant and reflects those in most housing need as effectively as possible.
- 2.2 This pressure has been created by the double-edged-sword of increased demand and lowered supply.
- 2.3 Central government's directive to Local Authorities, under the Housing Act 1980, to adopt the 'Right to Buy' Council Homes significantly impacted supply. Up until this time the production of new homes generally exceeded or balanced the numbers sold. Following this policy, the period of growth halted and began a decline.

- 2.4 Leicester currently loses approximately 2% of stock each year to the Right to Buy.
- 2.5 Another impact of the Right to Buy is that the majority of dwellings sold are houses rather than flats. As such, the right to buy has reduced the supply of family houses and altered the balance of stock.
- 2.6 One major consequence of reduced supply is the impact on prevention of homelessness, especially when compounded with reduced private rented sector market-access. Without adequate supply of accommodation, the Council is likely to see more families in temporary accommodation.
- 2.7 With regard to demand, likely contributors to the rise include;
- a growing population;
  - external factors such as welfare reform & frozen LHA rates making the private rented sector more difficult to access – both forcing families to live in smaller sized accommodation, and increasing instances of homelessness;
  - changes in average household income and other factors contributing to increasing indices of deprivation in the city.

2.8 As such, Councils must be vigilant in ensuring this precious resource is allocated to those most in need in order to mitigate risk and reduce preventable spending in other areas.

2.9 As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 the number of households on the Housing Register were:

<b>BAND</b>	<b>Total</b>
BAND 1	726 (12%)
BAND 2	2195 (35%)
BAND 3	3257 (53%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6178</b>

2.10 Expected number of households on the Housing Register following proposed changes:

<b>BAND</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
BAND 1	1128 (18%)	55% increase
BAND 2	1793 (29%)	18% decrease
BAND 3	3257 (53%)	No change
<b>Total</b>	<b>6178</b>	

2.11 Lettings from the Housing Register 2017 - 2018

<b>BAND</b>	<b>Total</b>
BAND 1	321 (24%)
BAND 2	864 (66%)
BAND 3	131 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1316</b>



**The proposed changes will ensure that offers will be made to households with the highest need (i.e. Band 1).**

2.12 Average Waiting Times (Months) for those Rehoused in the 6-month period 01/04/2018 – 30/09/2018 (General Needs Accommodation)

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6(+) Bed
BAND 1	3	4	4	6	14	-
BAND 2	5	17	21	57	-	-
BAND 3	7	-	-	-	-	-

2.13 The figures show that most lettings are to Band 2 households and the purpose of the review and recommendation is to seek to create a more proportionate balance of lettings to those in the most housing need.

### 3. Proposed Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

3.1 Appendix 1 lists the proposals along with the rationale for the changes.

#### 3.2 Homelessness Priority Change

Two new categories were added in April 2018 in line with the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act.

All households who wish to be offered Council or Housing Association homes, and are owed one of the three homeless duties (Prevention, Relief, or Main) are listed on the Housing Register except where legislation or policy prohibit.

These households are currently awarded Band 2 Priority.

As at 1st October 2018 the number of households on the Housing Register with homeless priority:

Priority Category	Singles / Couples	Families	Total
Prevention	79	212	291
Relief	56	53	109
Main	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>400</b>

Lettings from the Housing Register 01/04/2018 – 30/09/2018 to households with homeless priority:

Priority Category	Singles / Couples	Families	Total
Prevention	23	2	25
Relief	18	14	32
Main	0	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>62</b>

### Problem arising from the current arrangements

We are now 6 months into the new ways of working brought by the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The changes have had a positive impact regarding prevention of homelessness for Singles and Childless Couples, but negligible impact on Families due to the length of time it takes to receive an offer of accommodation – not achievable within the lifecycle of a typical homeless application.

As such, it is believed that this preference cannot be deemed “reasonable” for families if they are unable to realistically achieve an offer of accommodation in the period of award. Furthermore, it highlights disparity between the two groups (those with children, and those without). Changes would be required to give families the maximum opportunity and to align chances as much as possible with those of households without children.

Further to the above, there are currently higher than normal levels of temporary accommodation usage for families due to the lack of move-on options available. Opening another meaningful option to stop families entering, or move families on from, temporary accommodation would ensure that the relevant priority is awarded to maximise the opportunity for housing resolutions for homeless households in the prevention and relief period. This is more cost effective than families needing to go into temporary accommodation and aligns with Leicester’s Homeless strategy to prevent families from becoming homeless.

### 3.3 Statutory Overcrowding

Overcrowding is the biggest reason for households to join the Housing Register and currently accounts for 62% (3857) of the Register. Those households with the highest levels of overcrowding are currently given a Band 2 priority.

The current average waiting times (see 2.4) for Band 2 households of approximately 17 months for 2-bedroom accommodation, 21 months for 3-bedroom accommodation and 57 months for 4-bedroom accommodation. This means families are having to endure living in overcrowding conditions for several years before they can secure an offer of suitable accommodation.

Having different levels of overcrowding will ensure those households living in homes with the severest overcrowding will be awarded a higher priority.

Another initiative that has been introduced is the under-occupation/overcrowding project whereby overcrowded and under-occupying tenants are encouraged to mutually exchange.

Other options include adapting existing accommodation to allow the household to remain in their home whilst also resolving (or lessening) the impact of overcrowding. As a Division we have added £500,000 to undertake adaptations to LCC properties for the purpose of resolving overcrowding. This work is outside of the scope of this review, but if taken forward would require a project managed approach to;

- Identify pathways;
- Identify resources & priority households;
- Conduct feasibility/viability assessment on LCC stock, regards extension.

As at 1st October 2018 the number of overcrowded households on the Housing Register:

	<b>Total Households</b>
Band 2 Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	454
Band 2 Severe Overcrowding	275
Band 2 Statutory Overcrowding	60
Band 3 Overcrowding - Non Tenants	1530
Band 3 Overcrowding - Tenants	1538
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3857</b>

Expected number of overcrowded households on the Housing Register following proposed changes:

	<b>Total Households</b>
Band 1 Statutory Overcrowding	110
Band 2 Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	454
Band 2 Severe Overcrowding	225
Band 3 Overcrowding - Non Tenants	1530
Band 3 Overcrowding - Tenants	1538
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3857</b>

### 3.4 Victims of Domestic Abuse from other Local Authority Areas

Statutory guidance encourages local authorities to consider exempting from their residency requirements those who are currently living in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation having escaped from domestic violence in another local authority area.

Those who need to escape from domestic abuse should be given as much support and assistance as possible so that they are able to re-build their lives away from abuse and harm.

### 3.5 Veterans and their families

We intend to introduce two changes affecting veterans and their families to comply with forthcoming Guidance.

- Include a reasonable preference for veteran 'medical and welfare' within the Access, Health, and Support criteria. This would be in line with guidance to reflect mental ill health conditions commonly affecting veterans of the Armed Forces. The priority would sit within Band 1.
- Write an exemption into the Connection requirement, to exempt divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.

It is not expected that this will impact on the Housing Register in any significant way as numbers are expected to be very low.

### 3.6 Wheelchair Adapted Housing

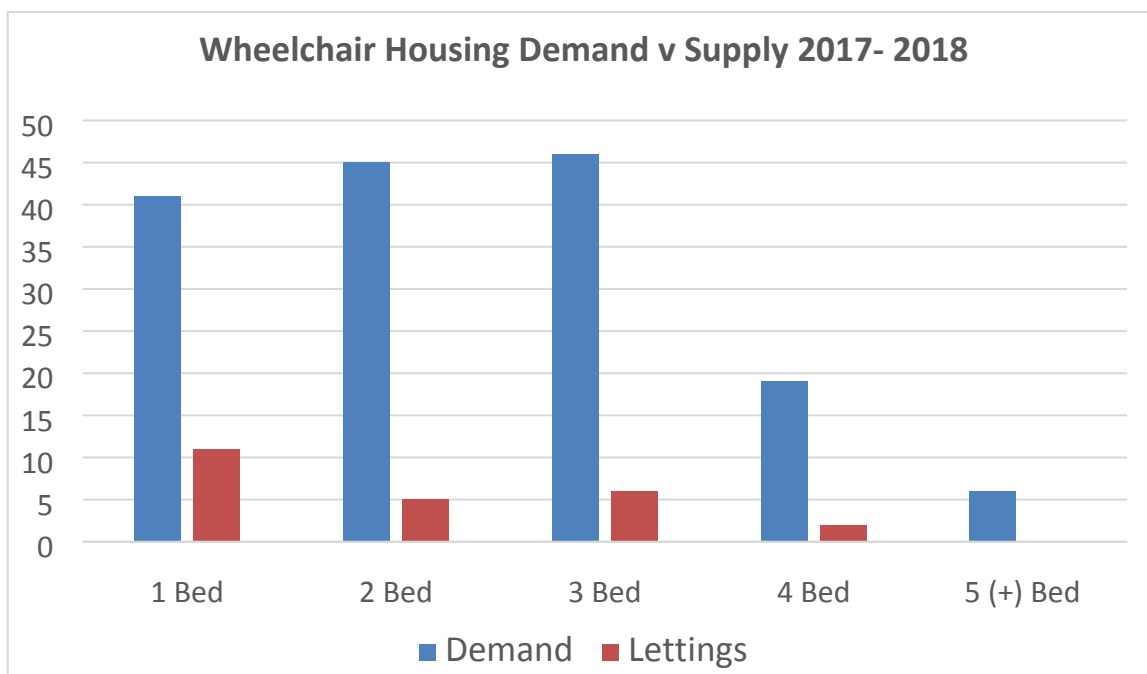
The number of households requiring wheelchair accessible housing has been increasing year on year, but the amount of suitable accommodation is limited.

The number of households requiring wheelchair accessible housing by tenure.

Tenure	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6(+) Bed	Grand Total
LCC Tenant	22	14	19	5	2	-	62
Registered Provider Tenant	6	10	9	6	2	-	33
Private Rent Tenant	8	18	16	7	1	1	51
Living with Parents/Relatives	3	4	2	-	-	-	9
Other	4	2	-	1	-	-	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>162</b>

Leicester City Council tenants account for 62 (38%) of the total demand for wheelchair accessible accommodation with Registered Provider (RP) tenants accounting for 33 (20%). As a responsible landlord there is a duty of care to provide safe accessible housing for its tenants.

Demand and supply of wheelchair accessible accommodation



The demand for wheelchair accessible accommodation outstrips the current supply of wheelchair adapted housing. The differential ratio between demand and supply varies from 4:1 for 1 bedroom accommodation to 10:1 for 4 bedroom accommodation.

A review of all households seeking wheelchair accessible accommodation could potentially lead to resolution of often difficult cases by considering different options.

Options include adapting existing general needs accommodation or adapting the disabled person's current property where possible.

Pathways already exist via OT Assessment to identify this need, and to identify the property's suitability/viability for adaptation.

### 3.7 Review of Households living in Insecure Accommodation

The criteria for the Insecure Accommodation priority needs to be reviewed and updated to reflect the changes in the Homeless Reduction Act. Whilst any proposal will not be retrospective, we will need to review all remaining households in this category as by nature of the eligibility criteria of the award, it is likely circumstances have changed.

This review is expected to reduce the numbers in Band 2 over time and mitigate some impacts of other proposals.

As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 there were 232 households with this priority.

### 3.8 Review of Households with Band 1 Priority award

We intend to introduce a new review process for all households within Band 1 to ensure that they are maximising all opportunities to resolve their housing circumstances due to the high priority afforded to their cases.

As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 there were 726 households within Band 1.

The process would aim to trigger time-appropriate reviews (between 3 and 12 months depending on priority category) of those within Band 1 in order to;

- Pro-actively manage priority cases;
- Enquire as to whether there are any other solutions available that the household should be made aware of;
- Identify those who may no longer be eligible for the band.

This process is expected to reduce the numbers in Band 1 over time and mitigate some impacts of other proposals.

## **4. Risks & Impacts of Proposals**

### 4.1 Impacts:

As with all changes to the Housing Allocations Policy where banding priorities are reconfigured, there will be impacts to waiting times for households on the Housing Register.

With any reconfiguration of banding schemes there will always be winners and losers. However, the main aim and objective of any change is to ensure that social housing continues to be allocated to those in the highest housing need.

The changes proposed within this report will give more preference to those with the highest need for housing, most notably giving higher preference to those without a home at all.

Currently the majority of lettings go to those households in Band 2

This is shown below:

Number on Housing Register		Number of Lets	
Band 1	726	134	Band 1
Band 2	2,195	414	Band 2
Band 3	3,257	62	Band 3

The changes proposed will better reflect the make-up of the housing register, ensuring that most lettings go to those households in Band 1, followed by Band 2, and lastly Band 3.

This is shown below:

Number on Housing Register		Number of Lets*	
Band 1	1,128	284	Band 1
Band 2	1,793	264	Band 2
Band 3	3,257	62	Band 3

\*Forecasted number of lets is an estimate based on change in numbers of applications within each band, and with consideration to the fact that those with homeless priority will be subject to auto bid and therefore more active than others within Band 1. The equivalent uplift for Band 1 has been conversely reduced in Band 2, arriving at the estimated picture shown above. The forecasted example meets the objective of change – to achieve more lets for those with the highest housing need.

#### 4.2 Potential risks associated with impacts:

<b>Risk:</b>	<b>Related Proposal</b>	<b>Controlling the risk:</b>
<p>1) The current number of households in Band 1 will increase by 55% (see Appendix 2 &amp; 3). Although this is unlikely to significantly impact those already in Band 1 (due to their time in need advantage) it will mean longer waiting times for Band 2 households.</p> <p>Possibility that the homelessness categories will dominate allocations of housing and this may affect future objectives i.e. tackling overcrowding.</p>	1	<p>a. Monitor in first 6 months to assess impact.</p> <p>b. Have robust processes in place to ensure that households in Band 1 are still eligible for the award.</p> <p>c. Reduce the use of Direct Lets to homeless households through Housing First in favour of regular lets via Band 1.</p>
<p>2) Risk that the change will not be effective or will have unexpected consequences.</p>	All	<p>a. Monitor closely and recommend further changes as required.</p>

#### **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### **5.1 Financial implications – Stuart McAvoy, Principal Accountant, Ext 37 4004**

Temporary Accommodation, including that provided through Bed & Breakfasts, is an expensive form of meeting housing need. The proposals within this report could reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation, helping to minimise Council expenditure.

##### **5.2 Legal Implications – Feizal Hajat, Qualified Lawyer**

Section 166A(13) of the Housing Act 1996 obliges a local housing authority to consult with every private registered provider of social housing and registered social landlord with which it has nomination arrangements before making an alteration to its allocation scheme that reflects a major change of policy.

In framing its housing allocation policy the Council must secure that reasonable preference is given to:

- (a) People who are homeless;
- (b) People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under homelessness legislation;
- (c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing, or living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;

- (d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds;
- (e) People who need to move to a particular locality within the district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others; and
- (f) Certain former members of the armed services.

### **5.3 Equality Impact Assessment – Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager, Ext 37 5811**

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a continuing Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in making decisions and carrying out their activities they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The proposals will affect people from across all protected characteristics, however some of the proposals relate specifically to a particular protected characteristic, for example the recommendations relating to wheelchair accessible accommodation (disability) and the recommendations relating to victims of domestic abuse which are more likely to be (although not solely) applicable to female service users (sex).

The proposals seek to address inequalities and are likely to support positive equalities outcomes. However, it is important to consider those who may be adversely affected by the proposals and whether they are likely to be disproportionately affected in relation to a protected characteristic.

It is recommended that an equality impact assessment is undertaken and used to inform the decision on adopting the proposals, taking into account information relating to the protected characteristics of those who will be affected and the responses to the proposed consultation. In the event that any disproportionate negative impact relating to a specific protected characteristic/s is identified in undertaking the equality impact assessment, mitigating actions must be identified to reduce or remove that impact.

### **5.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications – Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284**

There are no significant climate change implications associated with this report.

## **6. Background information and other papers:**

- Leicester City Council Housing Allocations Policy
- Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England, June 2012



- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Improving Access to Social Housing for Victims of Domestic Abuse in Refuges or Other Types of Temporary Accommodation: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England, November 2018
- Benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities

**7. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy
- Appendix 2 – Current banding scheme
- Appendix 3 – Proposed banding scheme
- Appendix 4 – Bench Marking with neighbouring local authorities
- Appendix 5 – Flow to show Homeless Process and related band eligibility

**Proposed Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy**

	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>What we do now</b>	<b>What we're proposing</b>	<b>Rationale for changes and the potential impact</b>
1.	<p><b>To increase banding priority to households who owed a Homelessness Prevention or Relief duty</b></p>	<p>Two new categories (Prevention and Relief duties) were added in April 2018 in line with the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act.</p> <p>All households who wish to be offered Council or Housing Association homes, and are owed one of the three homeless duties (Prevention, Relief, or Main) are listed on the Housing Register except where legislation or policy prohibit.</p> <p>These households are currently awarded Band 2 Priority.</p>	<p>To give households who are owed a Homelessness Prevention, Relief, or Main duty a Band 1 priority which is time limited by legislative periods.</p> <p>It is estimated that households will be owed the award for approx. 20 to 120 days, depending on the circumstances of the case.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>The Band 1 priority will be awarded to households who meet the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household is owed the Prevention, Relief or Main duty, and,</li> <li>• Household contains dependent children, a pregnant woman, and/or a vulnerable adult, and,</li> <li>• Household have not worsened their own circumstances, and,</li> <li>• Household has a live Housing Application, and no rent arrears, and,</li> </ul>	<p>The proposal will mean families who are owed the Prevention or Relief duty will have a realistic chance of securing an offer of suitable accommodation through the Housing Register.</p> <p>It will also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the realistic options available to prevent homelessness for Families, who tend to have longer waiting times on the register. This could; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce use of Temporary Accommodation and associated costs by reducing the risk for those owed a prevention duty of needing temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• allow for more Prevention successes for families.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Reduces waiting times for Homeless Families, bringing the waiting time closer to that of Singles and Childless Couples, thus addressing the apparent disparity between the two groups:</li> </ol>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household has exhausted sustainment options and requires a new accommodation solution.</li> </ul> <p>Households that do not meet the above rules will instead be awarded the Band 2 Homeless priority. Such circumstances may include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household is a non-vulnerable Single or Childless Couple; or,</li> <li>• Household has worsened their own circumstances; or,</li> <li>• Households has a suspended Housing Application; or,</li> <li>• Household has previously been awarded Band 1 Priority Homelessness as part of the same Homeless Persons Application, and refused their one-suitable-offer, losing the priority; or,</li> <li>• Households that are still exploring prevention via sustainment.</li> </ul> <p>Band 1 Priority Homelessness, in the same way as the existing Band 2 Homelessness, will be a one-offer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For 2-bed accommodation: Decrease from 22 months to 4 - 8 months.</li> <li>• For 3-bed accommodation: Decrease from 14 months to 4 - 6.5 months.</li> <li>• For 4-bed accommodation and bigger: Decrease from 40 months to 5 - 5 months.</li> </ul> <p>3. Where we cannot access the private rented sector in any great numbers it may be a solution to control the numbers in temporary accommodation and costs.</p> <p>4. Removes perverse incentive for applicants to access temporary accommodation to gain access to a Band 2 priority. This could mean less singles and families seeking temporary accommodation.</p> <p>5. Supports the ceasing of duty following refusal of suitable accommodation.</p> <p>6. Supports prevention casework by providing officers with a stronger negotiation tool. If families understand that an offer could be received within a few months, rather than 18 months, they are much more likely to oblige us and keep accommodating the applicant.</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
			<p>priority and applicants with the award will be subject to auto-bid. Refusal of a suitable offer is likely to result in ceasing of the owed homeless duty, and therefore ineligibility for the banding.</p> <p>The priority award will be time-limited by the fact households are only eligible for the award whilst owed a homeless priority. As soon as the household's homeless duty is ceased, eligibility for the award ceases.</p> <p>Cases where households do not get an offer of accommodation within the defined period will result in removal of band and reversion to the next highest eligible award. If they are owed the main homeless duty, they will be assisted with a private rented sector offer (see flow in Appendix 5)</p>	<p>7. Homelessness categories are currently placed on auto-bid and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensures that applicants do not use the higher banding priority to 'hold out' for a specific property or area when other suitable accommodation is available for them to bid for.</li> <li>Deters applicants and excluders who may be creating collusive arrangements, by creating a situation where Insecure Accommodation priority is likely to result in a property that is less than the applicant's ideal choice.</li> </ul> <p><b>With any reconfiguration of banding schemes there will always be winners and losers. However, the main aim and objective of any change is to ensure that social housing continues to be allocated to those in the highest housing need.</b></p> <p><b>It is likely that waiting times for Band 2 applicants will increase as a result of more lets going to those households with a higher housing need within Band 1.</b></p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
2.	<b>To increase banding priority to households assessed as being statutory overcrowded</b>	<p>Currently there are 4 different priorities given to households who are living in overcrowded conditions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who have been assessed as needing 2 or more additional bedrooms than they have currently use of.</li> <li>2. Band 2 'Statutory Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants living in accommodation that has been assessed as being statutorily overcrowded by a Private Sector Housing Officer or in the case of Council tenants who exceed the occupancy level for their tenancy.</li> <li>3. Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to families living in 1 bed accommodation with children 3 years and over.</li> <li>4. Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who have been assessed as needing one additional bedroom than they have currently use of or non-tenants who are living with</li> </ol>	<p>To give households living in overcrowded accommodation the following priority.</p> <p>Band 1 'Statutory Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants living in accommodation that has been assessed as being statutorily overcrowded by a Private Sector Housing Officer or in the case of Council tenants who exceed the occupancy level for their tenancy.</p> <p>Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who have been assessed as needing 2 or more additional bedrooms than they have currently use of.</p> <p>Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to families living in 1 bed accommodation with children 3 years and over.</p> <p>Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who have been assessed as needing one additional bedroom than they have currently use of or non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p>	<p>Overcrowding is the biggest reason for people to join the Housing Register and currently accounts for 65% (3888) of the Register.</p> <p>Due to the limited supply of homes becoming available average waiting times are increasing for family size homes. This means families are having to endure living in overcrowding conditions for several years before they can secure an offer of suitable accommodation.</p> <p>The proposal means that households living in homes with the severest overcrowding will be given the highest priority.</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
		<p>others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use.</p>	<p>Identify all households who have been assessed as living in statutory overcrowded accommodation.</p> <p><u>LCC Tenants</u></p> <p>Where a management report identifies a tenant's family exceeds the occupancy level of the property a Band 1 'Statutory Overcrowding' priority will be awarded.</p> <p><u>Housing Association/Private Tenants</u></p> <p>Where a Private Sector Housing Officer has assessed the accommodation has being statutorily overcrowded a Band 1 'Statutory Overcrowding' priority will be awarded.</p> <p>NB: Housing Association use bedroom sizes rather than number of bedrooms to determine levels of overcrowding.</p>	
3.	<p><b>To exempt victims of domestic abuse that have fled to a refuge in the city from another local authority area from the local connection requirement and award them an appropriate banding priority</b></p>	<p>Victims of domestic abuse that have fled to a refuge or other temporary accommodation in the city must meet one of the local connections requirements to join the Housing Register.</p> <p>Those victims that do not meet the local connection requirement have to be considered under exceptional circumstances and if approved must</p>	<p>To give victims of domestic abuse that have fled to a refuge in the city from another local authority area a local connection and award the Band 2 'Temporary Accommodation' priority to enable them to move from the refuge or other temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Victims can also be considered for any of the other banding priorities</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government have issued guidance to local authorities requiring them to consider exempting from their residency requirements those who are currently living in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation having escaped from domestic violence in another local authority area.</p>

	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>What we do now</b>	<b>What we're proposing</b>	<b>Rationale for changes and the potential impact</b>
		qualify for a banding priority before they can join the Housing Register.	that maybe appropriate such as the Access and Health and Harassment priorities.	Local authorities are also encouraged to give appropriate priority to those who are currently living in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation.
4.	<b>To make changes to improve access to social housing for veterans and their families</b>	<p>Veterans are given reasonable preference in Band 2, in line with guidance. Veterans with mental ill health would need to apply under normal AHCS policy points.</p> <p>Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence would need to meet local connection rules to appear on the housing register.</p>	<p>Reasonable preference for veterans will be improved by an addition of extra criteria within the AHCS Band 1 priority.</p> <p>Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence will be exempt from local connection rules.</p>	To comply with forthcoming guidance.
5.	<b>Review needs of wheelchair adapted accommodation</b>	<p>Where it has been identified a person has mobility difficulties, a referral is made to the occupational therapist for an assessment of their needs. Following the assessment, the occupational therapist will provide a report to the Housing Options Service detailing the needs of the service user and the suitability of their current accommodation.</p> <p>Housing Options will use the report to determine the type of accommodation the person can apply for on the Housing Register i.e.</p>	<p>To carry out a detailed review of all the cases currently registered who require fully wheelchair accessible accommodation and ensure they are still in need.</p> <p>Build up a profile of existing wheelchair adapted accommodation in the city.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Consider re-introducing the Adapted Housing Register to identify needs</p>	<p>The review will give better information on needs of existing applicants and more information available to new applicants to make informed choices.</p> <p>There will be better information regarding the existing stock of wheelchair adapted homes.</p> <p>There will be potential for resolution of often difficult cases by considering different options. Waiting times for ideal accommodation can be very long, and hardships can be experienced in that time. A move to</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
		<p>requiring fully wheelchair accessible accommodation.</p> <p>The report also assists to determine what banding priority will be given. Where the current accommodation is totally unsuitable to meet the needs of the disabled person, a Band 1 priority is given.</p>	<p>Proforma to be utilised by Tenancy Management to complete home visits for tenants and Housing Options for non-tenants. RPs would be approached to complete home visits for their tenants</p> <p>Build up a profile of existing wheelchair adapted accommodation in the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify properties let to wheelchair users from the Housing Register from the last 10 years lettings reports</li> <li>• Collate local information from the Districts</li> <li>• Contact Registered Providers for their stock list</li> </ul> <p>Offer tenants who are occupying wheelchair housing they no longer require, additional incentives to move.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants given help with removal costs, disconnections and reconnections of appliances</li> <li>• Utilise direct lets to expediate moves</li> </ul> <p>Look at the feasibility of completing more adapt to let properties and assess the potential of providing adaptations to existing tenant's properties.</p>	<p>more suitable accommodation as a 'stepped solution' would reduce the impact of waiting for the ideal property.</p>



	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proforma used to include additional information on feasibility of adapting an existing property subject to tenure</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that we maximise opportunity to include adapted accommodation within new housing developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage RPs to assist in the provision of wheelchair adapted accommodation and share information on the 34 RP tenants</li> <li>Raise awareness of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to adapt existing homes</li> </ul> <p>Explore alternative solutions on a case by case basis, including the possibility of a 'stepped accommodation solution' whereby someone is moved into 'better' accommodation to continue the search for 'perfect' accommodation from a safer and more comfortable base. This would be done in conjunction with OTs to ensure all offers of accommodation are still suitable for the applicant's needs.</p>	
6.		Households who were previously assessed as living in insecure	To carry out a detailed review of the Insecure Accommodation priority	The Insecure Accommodation category has been preceded by the

	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>What we do now</b>	<b>What we're proposing</b>	<b>Rationale for changes and the potential impact</b>
	<b>To review all remaining households in the Insecure Accommodation category</b>	accommodation are now considered under the Homelessness Prevention and Relief duties.	group which has been preceded by the prevention and relief duties.  <b>How?</b>  Review all cases in the Insecure Accommodation category and if still at risk of homelessness they will be considered under the prevention and relief duties.	prevention and relief duties and households are no longer considered under this category.  However, there remains over 200 households in this category. A review of the cases will ensure those who are still at risk of homelessness will be considered under the new duties.
7.	<b>To review all households within Band 1</b>	Households who are awarded a Band 1 priority are able to remain indefinitely, with the exception of Harassment priority where auto-bid applies after 4 weeks in order to accelerate a solution.	To implement a review process so that all applications within Band 1 are reviewed over set periods of time.  <b>How?</b>  Identify review periods of between 3 and 12 months dependent on urgency and availability of solutions. Set up reports to identify these applications automatically. Carry out a detailed review of the applications identified, on a rolling basis. Embed into BAU.	Band 1 priority contains 726 households as at October 2018, and it is proposed that we will add an additional 300 via Proposal 1. As such, we need to be vigilant in ensuring that those within the Band are eligible to remain.

## Current Banding Table

Band	Summary Descriptions (Reason)	Household Circumstances	Number of Households in Band (as at 01/10/2018)
Band 1	<b>Referred Case</b>	People in need of urgent re-housing and referred by Adult Social Care or Children's Services.	726
	<b>Compulsory Homelessness</b>	People in need of urgent re-housing whose properties are directly affected by public redevelopment programmes.	
	<b>Priority Under-occupation</b>	Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a two or three bedroom property and who wish to move to a property with one bedroom.	
	<b>Harassment</b>	People suffering from any form of harassment.	
	<b>Management Case</b>	Council tenants who need to move for management reasons.	
	<b>Wheelchair Adapted Housing No Longer Required</b>	Council and housing association tenants occupying a purpose built wheelchair adapted property who no longer require it.	
	<b>High Medical</b>	People whose current housing conditions are having a seriously adverse affect on the physical or mental health of either the applicant or a member of their household.	
	<b>Young Person Leaving Care</b>	Children leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS).	
Band 2	<b>Statutory Homelessness</b>	People who are statutory homeless and are owed the full housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996.	2195
	<b>Severe Overcrowding</b>	People whose homes are deemed to be severely overcrowded (two bedrooms or more short of their assessed need).	
	<b>Statutory Overcrowding</b>	People whose homes have been assessed as being statutorily overcrowded by an Environmental health Officer.	
	<b>Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed</b>	Families with children 3 years and over who are overcrowded and living in one bedroom accommodation.	
	<b>Under-occupation</b>	Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a three bedroom property by one bedroom and need two bedrooms.	
	<b>Insecure Accommodation</b>	People identified as needing urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness.	
	<b>Temporary Accommodation (Single)</b>	Single people living in designated temporary or supported accommodation.	
	<b>Temporary Accommodation (Family)</b>	Families living in designated temporary accommodation in the city.	
	<b>Insanitary or Unsatisfactory Accommodation</b>	People who have been assessed as living in insanitary or unsatisfactory accommodation.	

	<b>Leaving Residential Care</b>	People ready to leave residential care supported by Leicester City Council and/or NHS.	
	<b>Care Package</b>	People with a care package where Adult Social Care (LCC) assess that a move will assist independent living.	
	<b>Medium Medical</b>	People whose current housing conditions are having a negative affect on the physical or mental health of the applicant or a member of their household.	
	<b>Leaving Armed Forces</b>	People leaving the armed forces within the last 5 years but do not have a home to return to.	
<b>Band 3</b>	<b>Adult Leaving Care</b>	People identified by Adult Social Care as ready to leave the care of family or carer.	3257
	<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	People needing to move to a particular area of Leicester where hardship would be caused if they do not move and people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.	
	<b>Overcrowded Household (tenants)</b>	Tenants who are living in overcrowded conditions under Leicester City Council's overcrowding standard (one bedroom short of their assessed need).	
	<b>Overcrowded Household (non-tenants)</b>	Non-tenants living in overcrowded circumstances	
	<b>Sheltered Accommodation</b>	People over the age of 50 years requesting 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation only.	
	<b>Working Households</b>	Working households or those in local training schemes who need to move closer to their job/training scheme	

## Proposed Banding Table

Band	Summary Descriptions (Reason)	Household Circumstances	Expected Number of Households in Proposed Bands (based on waiting list as at 01/10/2018)
Band 1	Referred Case	People in need of urgent re-housing and referred by Adult Social Care or Children's Services.	1128
	Compulsory Homelessness	People in need of urgent re-housing whose properties are directly affected by public redevelopment programmes.	
	Priority Under-occupation	Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a two or three bedroom property and who wish to move to a property with one bedroom.	
	Harassment	People suffering from any form of harassment.	
	Management Case	Council tenants who need to move for management reasons.	
	Wheelchair Adapted Housing No Longer Required	Council and housing association tenants occupying a purpose built wheelchair adapted property who no longer require it.	
	High Medical	People whose current housing conditions are having a seriously adverse affect on the physical or mental health of either the applicant or a member of their household.	
	Priority Homelessness Prevention & Relief & Main (Mandatory auto-bid)	People who are owed the Prevention, Relief, or Main duty, and are deemed vulnerable households and are not intentionally homeless.	
	Statutory Overcrowding	People whose homes have been assessed has being statutorily overcrowded by an Environmental Health Officer.	
Young Person Leaving Care	Children leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS).		
Band 2	Other Homelessness Prevention & Relief (Mandatory auto-bid)	People who are owed the Prevention or Relief duty, but are not deemed vulnerable households or are intentionally homeless.	1793
	Severe Overcrowding	People whose homes are deemed to be severely overcrowded (two bedrooms or more short of their assessed need).	
	Overcrowded Families in 1 Bed	Families with children 3 years and over who are overcrowded and living in one-bedroom accommodation.	
	Under-occupation	Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a three-bedroom property by one-bedroom and need two-bedrooms.	
	Insecure Accommodation	People identified as needing urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness through sustainment of current accommodation.	
	Temporary Accommodation (Single)	Single people living in designated temporary or supported accommodation.	

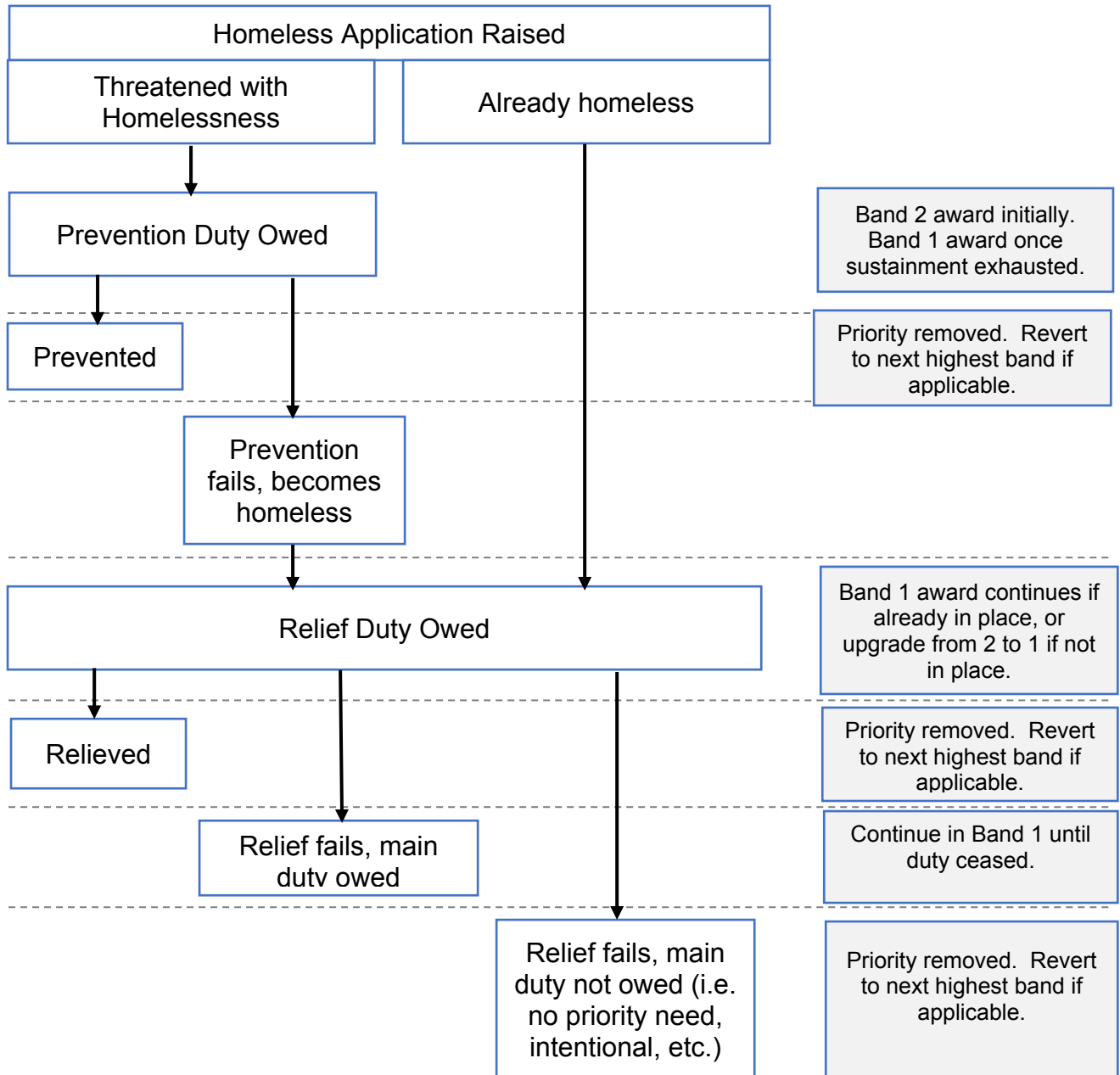
	<b>Temporary Accommodation (Family)</b>	Families living in designated temporary accommodation in the city.	
	<b>Insanitary or Unsatisfactory Accommodation</b>	People who have been assessed as living in insanitary or unsatisfactory accommodation.	
	<b>Leaving Residential Care</b>	People ready to leave residential care supported by Leicester City Council and/or NHS.	
	<b>Care Package</b>	People with a care package where Adult Social Care (LCC) assess that a move will assist independent living.	
	<b>Medium Medical</b>	People whose current housing conditions are having a negative affect on the physical or mental health of the applicant or a member of their household.	
	<b>Leaving Armed Forces</b>	People leaving the armed forces within the last 5 years but do not have a home to return to.	
<b>Band 3</b>	<b>Adult Leaving Care</b>	People identified by Adult Social Care as ready to leave the care of family or carer.	<b>3257</b>
	<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	People needing to move to a particular area of Leicester where hardship would be caused if they do not move and people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.	
	<b>Overcrowded Household (tenants)</b>	Tenants who are living in overcrowded conditions under Leicester City Council's overcrowding standard (one bedroom short of their assessed need).	
	<b>Overcrowded Household (non-tenants)</b>	Non-tenants living in overcrowded circumstances	
	<b>Sheltered Accommodation</b>	People over the age of 50 years requesting 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation only.	
	<b>Working Households</b>	Working households or those in local training schemes who need to move closer to their job/training scheme	

## Bench Marking with Neighbouring Local Authorities

Local Authority	Number of Bands in Allocations Scheme	Homelessness Band Priority	Overcrowding Banding Priority
Nottingham City Council	5 Band Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 1 for homeless households owed main duty</li> <li>• Band 3 for homeless priority need households but found to be 'intentionally homeless'</li> <li>• Band 4 for 'Other homeless households'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 2 for severe overcrowding</li> <li>• Band 3 for lacking at least 1 bedroom</li> <li>• Band 4 for 'other' overcrowding</li> </ul>
Derby City Council	2 Band Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Emergency' Band</li> <li>• 'Housing Need' Band (lower band you are prioritised for every 'housing need' you have)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 1 'Emergency' for homeless households owed main duty</li> <li>• Band 2 'Housing Need' for all other priority and non-priority homeless households owed a prevention or relief duty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 2 'Housing Need' for overcrowding, with an additional need considered for those overcrowded by 3 or more bedrooms</li> </ul>
Birmingham City Council	4 Band Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 2 for homeless households owed main duty</li> <li>• Band 3 for intentional and non-priority homeless households</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Band 1 for acute overcrowding (3 or more bedrooms lacking)</li> <li>• Band 2 for 2 or more bedrooms lacking</li> <li>• Band 3 for 1 bed overcrowding</li> </ul>

**Flow to show Homeless Application Process, alongside Homeless Priority Policy**

Note: Other eligible criteria apply, as detailed in Appendix 1.







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# **Housing Register Review Phase 3**

Housing Scrutiny Commission

11<sup>th</sup> March 2019

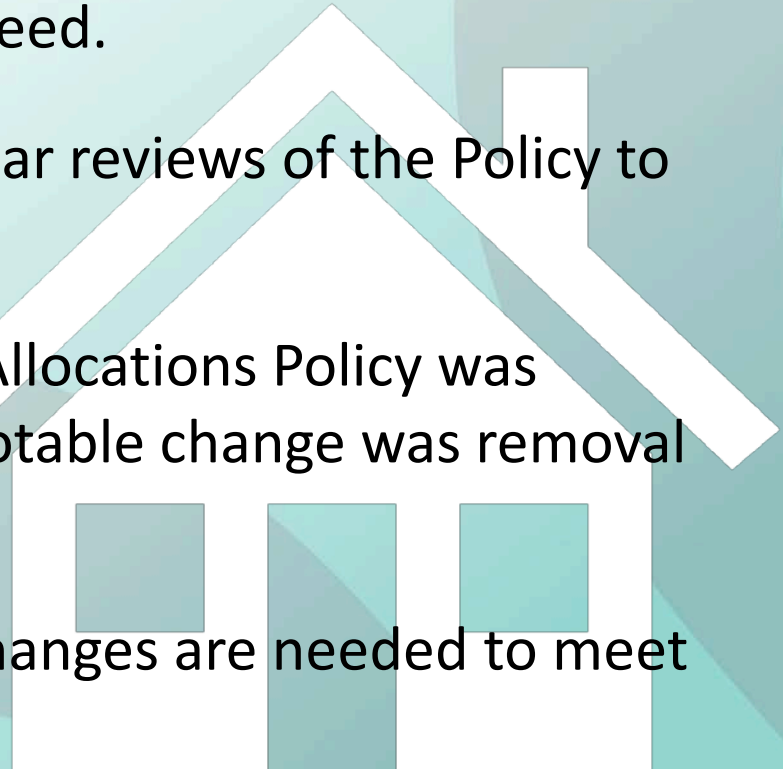
# Introduction

The Housing Act 1996 requires that Housing Allocations Policies must be designed to give reasonable preference to certain categories of people. The primary purpose is to ensure that homes go those in the most housing need.

38 We are under a duty to carry out regular reviews of the Policy to ensure that this remains the case.

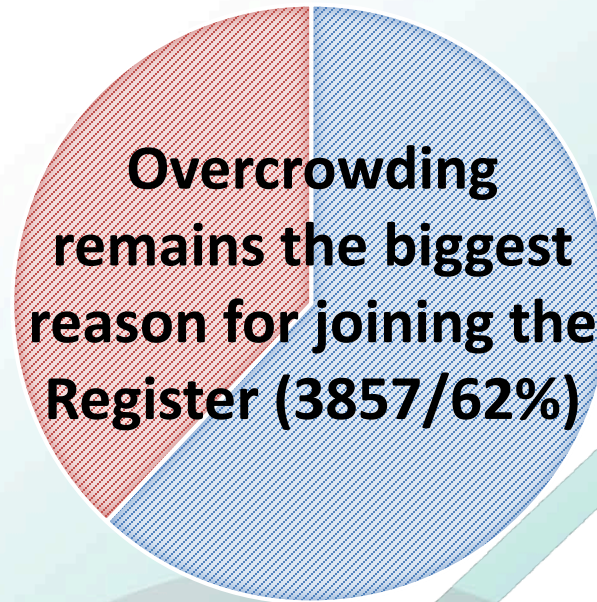
The last major review of the Housing Allocations Policy was undertaken in June 2016. The most notable change was removal of Band 4 and 5.

Almost two years on, another set of changes are needed to meet new challenges.



# Current Housing Register Position

(As at October 2018)



**Within Band 2,  
788 (36%) are  
Homeless or  
facing  
homelessness.**



**Highest demand is for 2-bedroom  
accommodation (2029/33%) of total demand**

# Headline Data for Lettings

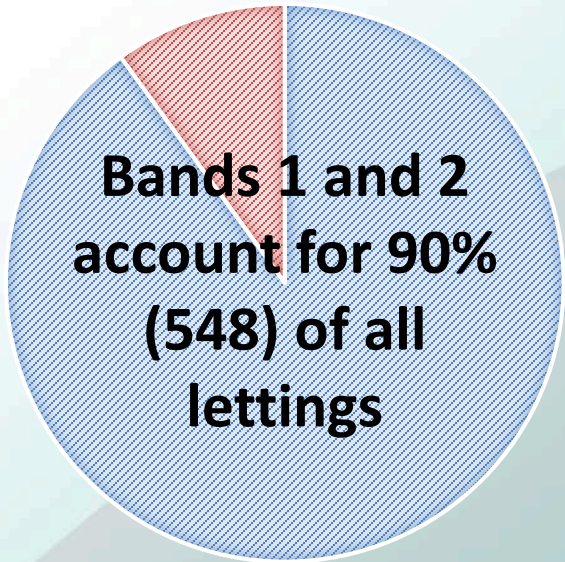


**610 lets between  
April & September 2018**

40



**9% decrease on  
same period last  
year.**



**Band 3 lettings account for 10% of  
lettings, but mainly 1 bedroom  
accommodation.**



# Purpose of today's presentation

- To summarise the content of the circulated report
- To seek feedback from Housing Scrutiny on the proposals outlined within this report

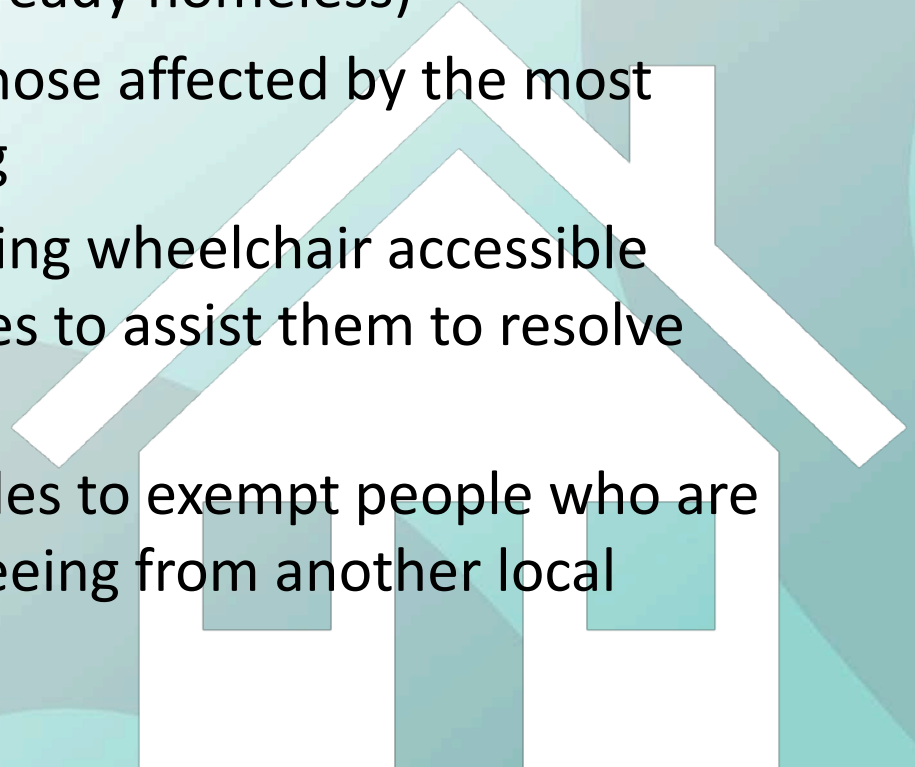
41



# Summary of Proposals

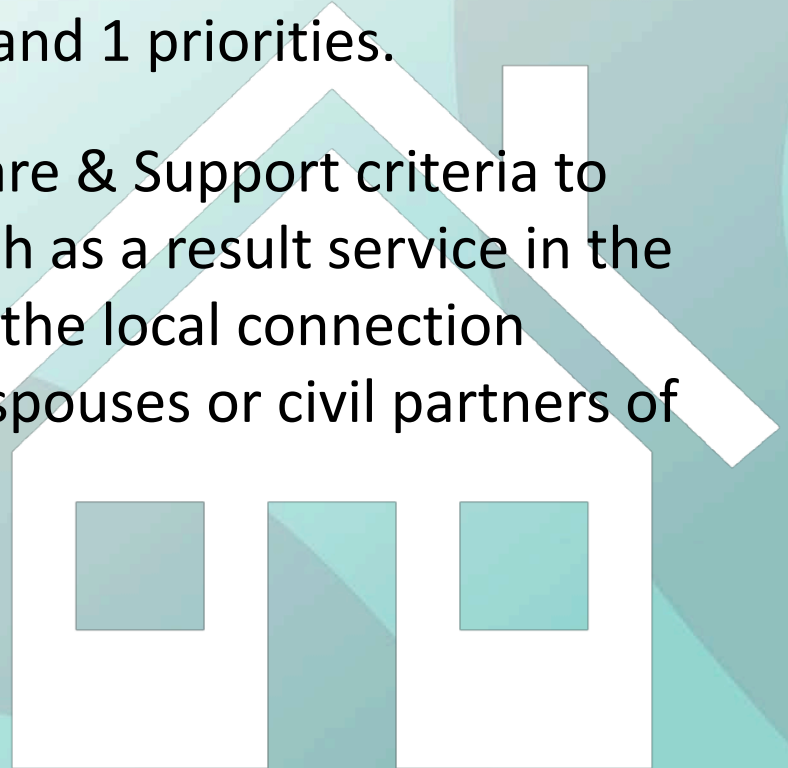
1. Giving increased priority to people who are owed a homeless duty (includes those at risk of losing their home in the near future, and those already homeless)
2. Giving increased priority to those affected by the most severe levels of overcrowding
3. A review of households needing wheelchair accessible accommodation and initiatives to assist them to resolve their needs
4. Changing local connection rules to exempt people who are victims of domestic abuse, fleeing from another local authority area

42



# Summary of Proposals

5. A review of applications with Insecure Accommodation priority
6. A review of all applications with Band 1 priorities.
- 43 7. A change to the Access, Health, Care & Support criteria to specifically include ill mental health as a result service in the Armed Forces, and a relaxation of the local connection criteria for divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel.



# Homelessness Priority

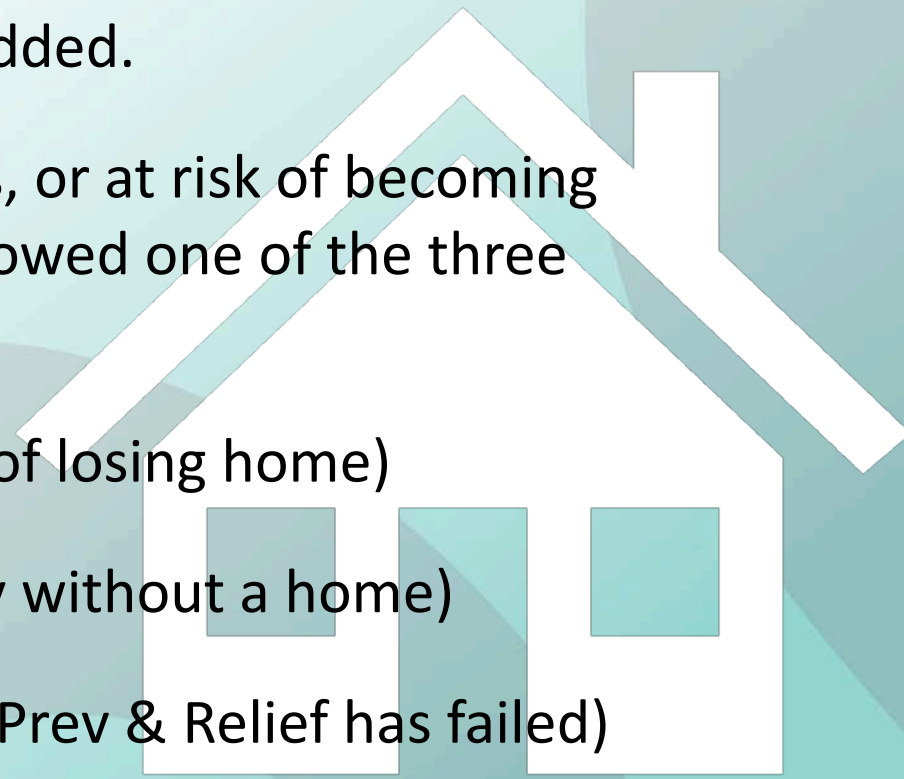
## Need for Change

### Brief background

In April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force and new homeless duties were added.

44 All households who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless in the near future, are owed one of the three homeless duties:

- **Prevention** (for those at risk of losing home)
- **Relief** (for those already without a home)
- **Main** (for those where Prev & Relief has failed)





# Homelessness Priority

## Need for Change

### Why is a change needed?

Two new categories were added in April 2018 to give reasonable preference to the two new duties. These awards are time-limited by nature of the circumstances under which they are awarded.

45

- positive impact for Singles and Childless Couples
- **but** negligible impact on Families due to the length of time it takes to receive an offer of accommodation – not achievable within the lifecycle of a typical homeless application
- difficulty moving families on creates additional pressure on temporary accommodation
- disparity between the two groups (those with children, and those without)

# Homelessness Priority

## Need for Change

### Proposal

We propose to increase banding priority (giving time-limited Band 1) to certain households who are owed a Homelessness duty.

### 46 Impact

Expected to;

- further enable the opportunity for households who are facing homelessness to achieve an offer of alternative accommodation before they lose their current accommodation.
- enable those who are already homeless to achieve a quicker move-on from temporary accommodation.
- reduce need for Temporary Accommodation, and its associated costs

# Severe Overcrowding Need for Change

## Brief background

Households with the highest levels of overcrowding are currently given a Band 2 priority.

47 The current average waiting times for Band 2 households of approximately

- 17 months for 2-bedroom accommodation
- 21 months for 3-bedroom accommodation
- 57 months for 4-bedroom accommodation

This means families are having to endure living in overcrowding conditions for several years before they can secure an offer of suitable accommodation.

# Severe Overcrowding Need for Change

## Proposal

We propose to move those households who are the most severely overcrowded to Band 1.

## 48 Impact

Expected to;

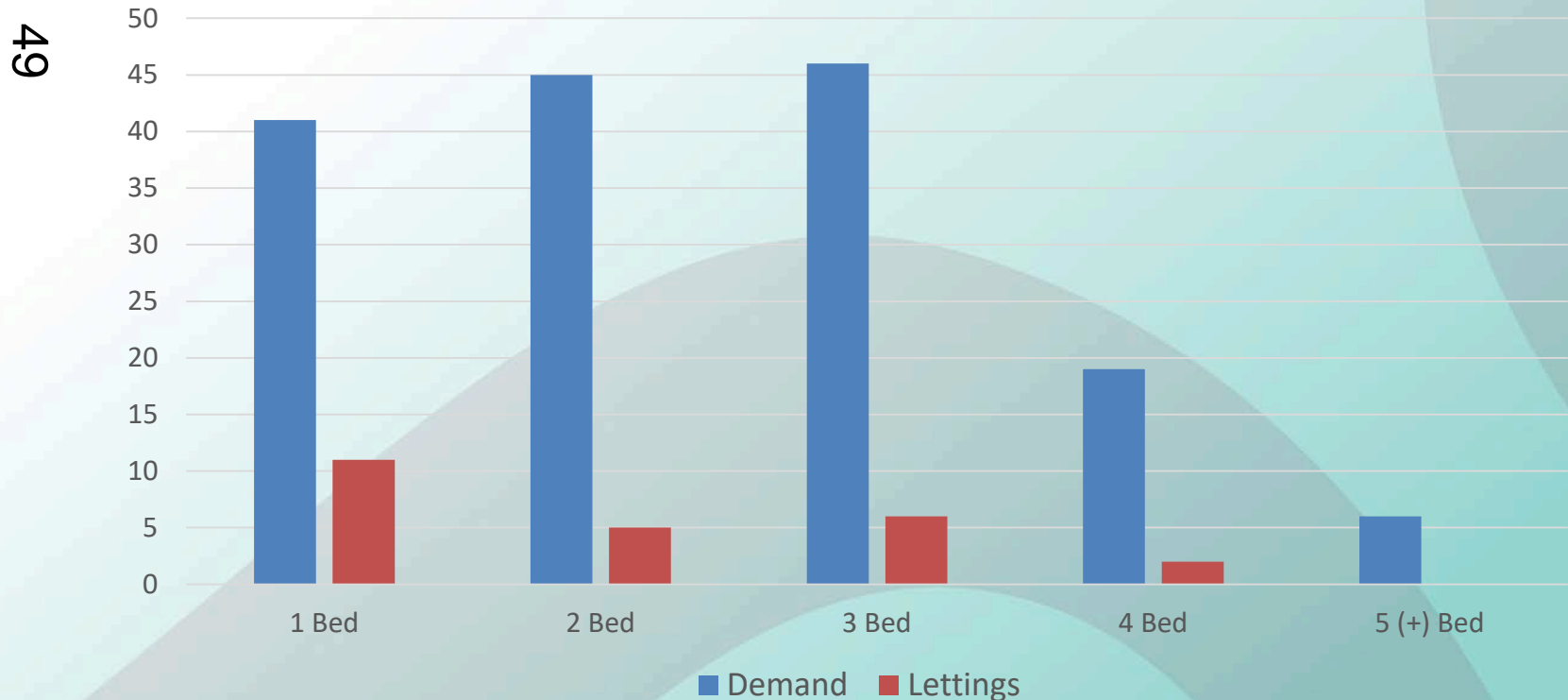
- ensure that the register reflects the different levels of overcrowding and that those who are most severely/statutorily overcrowded receive the highest priority



# Wheelchair Adapted Housing Need for Change

## Brief background

The demand for wheelchair accessible accommodation outstrips the current supply of wheelchair adapted housing.



# Wheelchair Adapted Housing

## Need for Change

### Proposal

We propose to conduct a review of all households seeking wheelchair accessible accommodation could potentially lead to resolution of often difficult cases by considering different options.

50 Options include adapting existing general needs accommodation or adapting the disabled person's current property where possible.

Pathways already exist via OT Assessment to identify this need, and to identify the property's suitability/viability for adaptation. Further to this, joint working arrangements have been established with Adult Social Care to ensure that the most urgent cases are identified and options for these cases fully considered.

# Victims of Domestic Violence / Abuse (DVA) from other Local Authority Areas

## Brief background

Statutory guidance encourages local authorities to consider exempting from their residency requirements those who are currently living in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation having fled from domestic violence in another local authority area.

## Proposal

We propose to relax the local connection rules for victims of DVA.

## Impact

Those who need to escape from domestic abuse will be enabled to apply to this housing district so they can re-build their lives away from abuse and harm.

# Veterans and their families

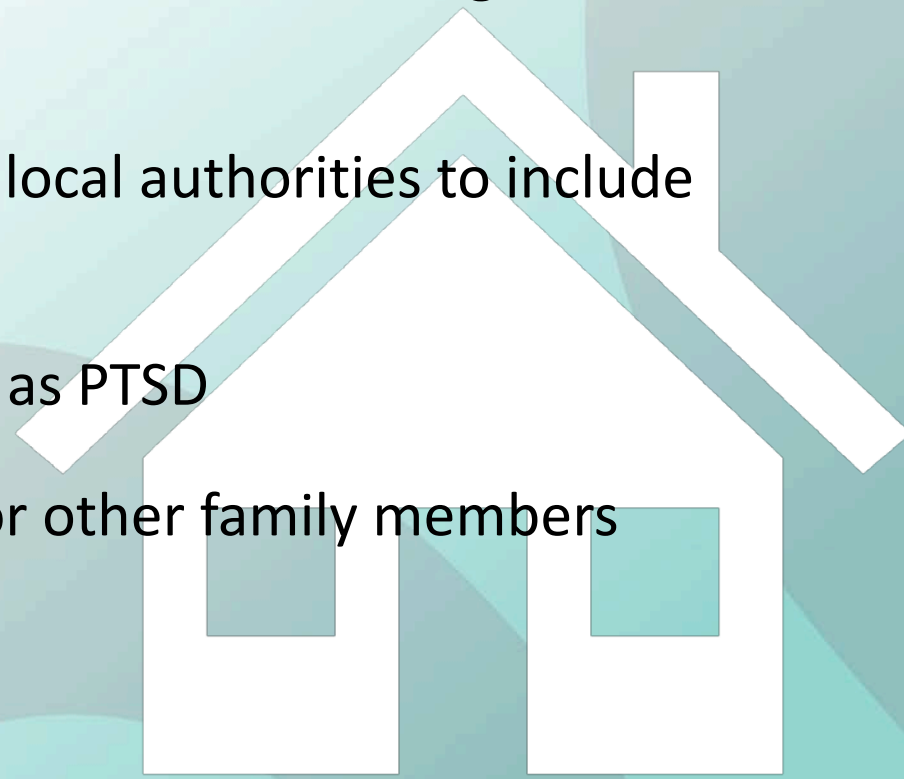
## Need for Change

### Brief background

Priority is currently awarded to Veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces.

Recent guidance has encouraged local authorities to include specific consideration of;

- related health conditions such as PTSD
- local connection restrictions for other family members following separation.





# Veterans and their families

## Need for Change

### Proposal

We propose to introduce two changes affecting veterans and their families in order to comply with impending Guidance (currently under consultation).

- 53
1. Include a reasonable preference for veteran 'medical and welfare' within the Access, Health, and Support criteria. This would be in line with guidance to reflect mental ill health conditions commonly affecting veterans of the Armed Forces. The priority would sit within Band 1.
  2. Write an exemption into the Connection requirement, to exempt divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the MOD.

### Impact

It is not expected that this will impact on the Housing Register in any significant way as numbers are expected to be very low.

# Impact & Risks

As with all changes to the Housing Allocations Policy where banding priorities are reconfigured, there will be impacts to waiting times for households on the Housing Register.

54 With any reconfiguration of banding schemes there will always be winners and losers. However, the main aim and objective of any change is to ensure that social housing continues to be allocated to those in the highest housing need.

The changes proposed within this report will give more preference to those with the highest need for housing, most notably giving higher preference to those without a home at all.

Currently the vast majority of lettings go to those households in Band 2

# Questions?

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**HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
<b>Meeting Date</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2018  <b>Agenda Date:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2018  <b>Papers despatch:</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	Rent arrears report – Year-end report  Voids & Lettings Report – Year-end report  Who gets social housing  Tenants’ forum notes  Work programme	Charlotte McGraw  Simon Nicholls  Caroline Carpendale	
<b>Meeting Date</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2018  <b>Agenda Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2018  <b>Papers despatch:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	Progress update on Housing Company  Voids & Lettings Report Qtr 1  Conditions of Tenancy – consultation  Rent arrears report Qtr 1  Empty Homes update report  Preparing for winter	Simon Nicholls  Simon Nicholls  Nick Griffiths  Charlotte McGraw  Simon Nicholls  Simon Nicholls	
<b>Meeting Date</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2018  <b>Agenda Date:</b> 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2018  <b>Papers despatch:</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2018	Progress report for Goscote House & Sprinklers update  Channel Shift/ IT update  Repairs performance and update Report  Right to buy strategy – government consultation: council response	Simon Nicholls/Suki Supria  Charlotte McGraw  Ian Craig  Chris Burgin	Consultation closes the day after the commission meeting

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<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018</p>	<p>Rent arrears report Q2 &amp; Universal Credit roll out update</p> <p>Sheltered Accommodation</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy progress report</p> <p>Empty homes update – numbers refresh</p>	<p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Simon Nichols</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018</p> <p><b>Agenda meeting</b> 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018</p>	<p>HRA Budget</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018</p>	<p>Repairs performance and update Report</p> <p>Overcrowding project update</p> <p>General Fund – Council Budget</p> <p>Voids &amp; Lettings Report Qtr 2</p>	<p>Ian Craig</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Alison Greenhill</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019</p>	<p>Rent arrears report Q3</p> <p>Housing register review</p>	<p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p>	

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<b>To be allocated</b>	District Service Priorities & performance including ASB service performance	Suki Supria	Deferred from March 2019 meeting
	Private sector home maintenance advice	Simon Nicholls	
	Service scrutiny of the Dawn Centre	Simon Nichols	
	Goscote House redevelopment strategy	Alison Greenhill	
	Update on discretionary funding	Caroline Carpendale	Referenced in January 2019 meeting
	Voids and lettings: 12-month report	Ian Craig	
	Electronic customer satisfaction monitoring		
	Feedback on consultation relating to tenants' terms and conditions?		

