

# Executive Decision Notice

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Review of the Housing Register /  
Housing Allocations Policy  
Feedback of the Consultation Exercise

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Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor Housing

Decision to be taken on: 23 June 2017

Lead Director: Chris Burgin



**City Mayor**



# City Mayor

## Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors:

Kanwaljit Basra – Housing Register & Allocations Team Leader, Housing Options Service, ext. 37-1745

Caroline Carpendale – Head of Service, ext. 37-1701

Chris Burgin – Director of Housing, ext. 37-5143

■ Report version number: V1

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 After considering a report on the Review of the Housing Register / Housing Allocations Policy, Executive approval was given to consult on the proposals (Appendix A).
- 1.2 Local Authorities are required to consult and seek the views of Registered Social Housing Providers and it is also good practice to seek views of all those who may be affected by, or have an interest in, the way social housing is allocated.
- 1.3 An online consultation exercise that ran for a 6 week period from 11th November – 23rd December 2016 has now been completed.
- 1.4 The online consultation provided 47 responses to the proposals although not all responded to each individual proposal.
- 1.5 Overall the range of responses was between 51% - 70% stating that the changes would have either a positive effect or no effect upon them compared with 4% - 34% of the respondents who stated the proposals would have a negative effect on them.
- 1.6 The full results of the consultation are attached at Appendix B.
- 1.7 The Housing Scrutiny Commission were also consulted in regards to the proposals and feedback from the consultation exercise. No formal recommendations have been received

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive approve the proposals set out in the review of the Housing Register / Housing Allocations Policy report.(Appendix A)

## **3. Supporting Information and Options**

- 3.1 As part of the continuous monitoring of the Housing Register / Housing Allocations Policy, we need to ensure the policy remains fit for purpose against the backdrop of increasing demand for social housing and the limited supply of homes.
- 3.2 Full and very careful consideration has been given to the feedback received from the consultation exercise and taking this into account it is recommended that Executive approve the proposals.
- 3.3 The proposals will give greater preference to people with the most housing need who do not have the resources to explore other housing options and will reduce the administrative burden of managing a Housing Register of circa 11100 applicants of whom 40% have no realistic chance of achieving an offer of accommodation.
- 3.4 The proposals will also assist in managing customer expectations and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.

## **4. Details of Scrutiny**

- 4.1 The feedback on the consultation exercise was presented to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the 30th January 2017. In summary Members said whilst they were slightly concerned about the relatively low number of responses received to the consultation exercise they were supportive of the proposals.

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

### **5.1 Financial implications – Peter Coles - Principal Accountant**

Indicative savings are likely due to proposed efficiencies in the reduction of the number of applicants on the register, but further work will be needed to quantify how much and this will be done if any proposals are implemented.

### **5.2 Legal implications – Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)**

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 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications – Mark Jeffcote, Senior Environmental Consultant**

There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

### **5.4 Equalities Implications - Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead**

Our Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to consider the impacts of any proposed changes to our policies or practice to those affected by these changes, the protected characteristics of those affected, and for any adverse impacts, mitigating actions that reduce or remove those impacts.

The proposed changes for the most part maintain the current housing allocation policy's top 3 band prioritisation of housing need, adding a new Band 2 criteria for insanitary or 1unsatisfactory accommodation and increasing prioritisation of the need for sheltered accommodation (people over the age of 50) from band 4 to band 3.

The proposal suggests deletion of the following criteria regarding housing circumstances:

Band 3 criteria of 'single no fixed abode' - this was a category that was never used as intended as there is also an existing Band 3 'Overcrowding' category for people lacking a bedroom. Singles who are NFA will be allocated this Band 3 category.

Band 4 criteria of sharing facilities but having own bedroom – this group of people (i.e. living with family or friends) are suitably housed in regards to the number of bedrooms they have use of but have to share facilities such as the kitchen or bathroom. If their circumstances change for example they are asked to leave, then an assessment is undertaken to verify their change of circumstances. This may result in them being awarded a higher Band 2 priority as they would be regarded as living in insecure accommodation.

Band 4 criteria of needing to be in a particular area of Leicester for emotional support from family, friends or others – there is already within the policy, a Band 3 category for people who need to move on care and support grounds where

hardship would be caused if they did not move. This category has been extended to include those that need to move due to medical or welfare grounds with a slighter higher verification of proof required than that was previously required in Band 4.

Band 5 for those whose housing circumstances are not in any of the bands and are therefore not in need for housing in keeping with the intention of the housing allocations policy.

The proposed deletion of bands 4 and 5 are likely to affect all protected characteristics. Band 4 applicants are considered to have very low housing need and who would not realistically achieve an offer of accommodation. Band 5 applicants have no identified housing needs or are considered to be adequately housed. On this basis, no mitigating actions for band 5 are required.

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

- Leicester City Council Housing Allocations Policy
- Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England, June 2012
- Providing social housing for local people: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England, December 2013
- The Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Benchmarking with other local authorities

## **7. Summary of Appendices**

Appendix A      Review of the Housing Register / Housing Allocations Policy Report

Appendix B      Online Consultation Feedback

## **8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

## **9. Is this a “key decision”?**

Yes. This is because these proposals affect all wards of the City

# Executive Decision Report

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Review of the Housing Register /  
Housing Allocations Policy

Assistant Mayor Briefing: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Executive Briefing: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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Lead Assistant Mayor: Cllr Andy Connelly

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

## Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors:

Kanwaljit Basra – Housing Register & Allocations Team Leader, Housing Options Service, ext. 37-1745

Caroline Carpendale – Head of Service, ext. 37-1701

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### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Communities and Local Government issue guidance to housing authorities requiring them to give consideration to reviewing their existing housing allocation policies. The Government has made it clear they expect social homes to go to people who genuinely need and deserve them.
- 1.2 Furthermore the introduction of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 also needs to be considered as it will impact on the Council's Housing Allocations Policy in regards to the mandatory use of fixed term tenancies and 'pay to stay' for higher income local authority tenants.
- 1.3 The Council's Housing Register is a list of qualifying people who have applied for council housing and nominations from the housing associations. A person's priority position on the Housing Register is determined by their housing need.
- 1.4 The Housing Act 1996 section 166A(3) requires that an allocations policy must be framed to give reasonable preference to certain categories of people.
- 1.5 The rules and the procedures that sets out who can apply to join the Housing Register along with their relative priority are governed by the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. The Housing Allocations Policy is subject to change either through the issuing of statutory guidance or by a change in local priorities agreed by elected members. Any changes to the Housing Allocations Policy may mean a person's position on the list can also be affected.
- 1.6 The proposed changes will give greater preference to people with the most housing need who do not have the resources to explore other housing options.
- 1.7 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.

#### Recommendations:

1. To consult with stakeholders and seek the views of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the following proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy:
2. To look to reduce the numbers on the Housing Register and reconfigure the priority order to ensure that the Register is fit for purpose and primarily

addresses those in the most housing need.

3. To reduce the administrative burden of managing a Housing Register of 11149 applicants (as at 01/04/2016) of whom circa 1479 have a realistic chance of achieving an offer of accommodation. This is based on the number of lettings for 2015-2016.
4. We need to ensure we manage customer expectations realistically at the earliest opportunity of them applying for assistance to fully inform them of their housing options.

It is proposed:

- To remove existing households from the Housing Register who have no or little housing need.
  - To remove existing households who own their homes except where there are over-riding circumstances of need.
  - To remove those households who following assessment have the financial resources to secure alternative accommodation.
  - To limit the qualifying income threshold for higher income households.
  - To reconfigure the overcrowding rules.
  - To reconfigure the under-occupation rules.
  - To give priority to people living in insanitary & unsatisfactory housing
  - To reconfigure the bedroom rules to the government bedroom standard.
  - To enable applicants the choice to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than their normal eligibility.
  - To enable families with 1 child aged 2 years and under the choice to apply for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation.
5. To report on the results of the consultation to the Executive for a decision on the proposed changes.

## **2. Current Policy**

- 2.1 All households who wish to be offered Council or Housing Association homes are listed on the Housing Register except where legislation or policy prohibit (e.g. certain persons from abroad and in cases where there is unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority).
- 2.2 The Policy is used to both allocate the Council's own dwellings and to make nominations to housing associations.
- 2.3 Leicester City Council's current housing allocations scheme is a banding scheme where households are assessed and placed in 1 of 4 bands depending on their current housing circumstances and need (see Appendix 3).



- 2.4 Band 1 is for those households who have been assessed as having the highest priority for an allocation of accommodation, and then on a sliding scale of priority to Band 4 who are, those households who are considered to be in low housing need.
- 2.5 We now have strong links with the private rented sector and many people coming to the Council for advice are helped through the LeicesterLet and Rent deposit schemes.

### 3. Statistics from the Housing Register

- 3.1 As at 1st April 2016 the number of households on the Housing Register were:

BANDS	Total
BAND 1	722 (7%)
BAND 2	2821 (25%)
BAND 3	2818 (25%)
BAND 4	2191 (20%)
BAND 5*	2597 (23%)
<b>Applications</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11149</b>

\*With effect from 1st May 2014 no new applicants are accepted into Band 5

- 3.2 Lettings from the Housing Register 2015 – 2016 (LCC/Housing Association/HomeCome)

BANDS	Total
BAND 1	342 (23%)
BAND 2	874 (59%)
BAND 3	171 (12%)
BAND 4	86 (6%)
BAND 5	6 (<1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1479</b>

Appendix 2 sets out the total lettings for the last 10 years and highlights the decrease in the number of lettings which places pressure upon the Housing Register and managing the expectations.

Whilst there was an increase in lettings in 2014-2015, this is regarded as a one off due to the large number of new build accommodation that became available that year.

It is projected that going forward up to 800 less properties will be available due to Right to Buy.

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

- 4.1 Appendix 1 lists the proposals along with the rationale for the changes.

## **5. Options**

There are two options available:

### **5.1 Option 1**

To maintain the status quo and make no changes to the published Housing Allocations Policy.

- Guidance states social housing should go to those households in the most need and the Council's Housing Allocations Policy should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that this is achieved. The last full review was in 2010 when the Housing Allocations Policy changed from a points based scheme to a banding scheme.
- Currently the Housing Allocations Policy is considered to be complex and not easy to understand. This is reflected by the high number of enquiries that are received from both elected members and the general public.
- The introduction of significant changes to the policy in May 2014 and August 2015 were not applied retrospectively. This has added to the complexity and different rules for applicants based upon their date of application. This makes the policy harder to understand e.g. existing homeowners are allowed to remain on the Register whereas new applicants who are homeowners are not allowed to join.

or

### **5.2 Option 2**

To consult on some or all of the proposals outlined in the report and subject to the response to consultation, adopt the relevant changes to the published Housing Allocations Policy.

- The review will ensure that the policy addresses those most in need as well as helping the policy be more transparent, simplified and easier to understand by all.
- It will better manage customer expectations.
- It will achieve efficiency savings in the management of the Housing Register.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 As the proposals to change the Housing Allocations Policy are considered to be major changes there is a statutory requirement that we seek the views of Registered Social Housing Providers which have nomination agreements with

the authority but it is also good practice that all those who may be affected by, or have an interest in, the way social housing is allocated are also consulted. Therefore we propose to consult with all parties who may be affected by, or have an interest in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

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

### **7.1 Financial implications – Pete Coles Principal Accountant (Housing)**

Indicative savings are likely due to proposed efficiencies in the reduction of the number of applicants on the register, but further work will be needed to quantify how much and this will be done if any proposals are implemented.

### **7.2 Legal Implications – Jeremy Rainbow, Principal Lawyer (Litigation)**

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- (k) 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
- (l) Certain former members of the armed services.

### **7.3 Equality Impact Assessment – Iren Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead**

Our Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to consider the impacts of any proposed changes to our policies or practice to those affected by these changes, the protected characteristics of those affected, and for any adverse impacts, mitigating actions that reduce or remove those impacts.

The proposed changes for the most part maintain the current housing allocation policy's top 3 band prioritisation of housing need, adding a new Band 2 criteria for insanitary or unsatisfactory accommodation and increasing prioritisation of the need for sheltered accommodation (people over the age of 50) from band 4 to band 3.

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**7.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications – Mark Jeffcote, Senior Environmental Consultant**

There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

**8. Background information and other papers:**

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- Benchmarking with other local authorities

**9. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy
- Appendix 2 – Lettings from the Housing Register 2006 – 2016
- Appendix 3 – Current banding scheme
- Appendix 4 – Proposed banding scheme
- Appendix 5 – Benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities

**10. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**11. Is this a “key decision”?**

Yes. This is because these proposals affect all wards of the City

## Proposed Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
1.	<b>Removal of existing Band 5 applicants from the Housing Register</b>	<p>Since 1st May 2014, no new applications are accepted from those with no identified housing need or those who are considered to be adequately housed.</p> <p>As at 1st April 2016 there were 2597 households that remain on the Housing Register in Band 5 whose application dates precede 1st May 2014.</p>	<p>To remove all households in Band 5</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept new applicants with no housing need.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants in Band 5 advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 2597 households from the Housing Register. It would also remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This will make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>This will also make it easier to manage customer expectations as only people with an identified need to move will qualify to appear.</p> <p>Band 5 applicants are increasingly frustrated as there is little chance of them receiving an offer.</p> <p>Maintaining Band 5 applicants places an administrative burden on the service as applications have to be continued to be processed from people who are considered to be suitably housed.</p> <p>Removal of Band 5 applicants will reduce the administrative burden on the service and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.</p> <p>There will be some financial savings as these applications will no longer</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
				need to be processed and annual review letters sent.
2.	<b>Removal of Band 4 applicants from the Housing Register</b>	<p>Any applicant who is eligible to join the Housing Register and meets any of the following criteria will be placed in Band 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who share facilities with other households but have their own bedroom</li> <li>• People who need to move to, or remain in, a particular area of Leicester to give or receive emotional support from family, friends or others in the community</li> <li>• People over the age of 50 years requesting 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation only</li> </ul> <p>As at 1st April 2016 there were 2191 households in Band 4.</p>	<p>To remove all households in Band 4 except those who are requesting sheltered housing as they will be given increased Band 3 priority.</p> <p>This will mean the Housing Register will just have 3 bands with circa 6766 households (see Appendix 4).</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Written notification to all applicants in Band 4 advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p> <p>Existing Band 4 applicants (405) requesting 1 bed sheltered housing will be moved to Band 3 as sheltered housing is readily available.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 1786 households from the Housing Register.</p> <p>Band 4 applicants have very little chance of receiving an offer other than sheltered housing. There were 40 lettings of sheltered housing to Band 4 applicants.</p> <p>Removal of Band 4 applicants will reduce the administrative burden on the service and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.</p> <p>There will be some financial savings as these applications will no longer need to be processed and annual review letters sent.</p>
3.	<b>Removal of existing owner occupiers from the Housing Register</b>	<p>Since 10th August 2015 owner occupiers no longer qualify to join the Housing Register unless there are extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>There are currently 287 households that remain on the Housing Register who are owner occupiers whose application date precedes 10th August 2015.</p>	<p>To review all owner occupiers on the Housing Register and remove those who do not have any exceptional circumstances to remain.</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept owner occupiers onto the Housing Register.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 287 owner-occupiers from the Housing Register.</p> <p>The change would also remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This would make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>There would also be equality in the transparency of the policy that all</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact														
			<p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants who are owner occupiers advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p>	<p>owner occupiers are treated the same.</p> <p>As at 01/04/2016 the number of owner occupiers on the Housing Register:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>BAND 1</b></td> <td><b>16</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>BAND 2</b></td> <td><b>32</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>BAND 3</b></td> <td><b>23</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>BAND 4</b></td> <td><b>71</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>BAND 5</b></td> <td><b>145</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Grand Total</b></td> <td><b>287</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Total	<b>BAND 1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>BAND 2</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>BAND 3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>BAND 4</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>BAND 5</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>287</b>
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4.	<b>Removal of applicants with sufficient financial resources to secure alternative accommodation from the Housing Register</b>	Since 10th August 2015 households with a total income of £25k per year (single household) or £40k per year (joint households) or capital assets of over £50k are not allowed to join the Housing Register.	<p>To extend the rules to those with sufficient financial resources whose application date preceded 10th August 2015.</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept people who had the financial resources to secure alternative accommodation onto the Housing Register.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants after review, advising there is now a threshold for earnings and savings and financial checks will</p>	<p>The change would remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This would make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>There would also be equality in the transparency of the policy that all applicants are treated the same.</p> <p>Removing existing applicants who exceed the financial thresholds may also help to reduce the number of council properties purchased under the Right to Buy scheme.</p> <p>Current rules allow any public sector tenant who has been a tenant for 3 or more years at any point to qualify to buy the home they currently live in</p>														



	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
			be undertaken at point of offer.	if it is eligible for Right to Buy.  Qualifying tenants can currently get a 35% discount up to a maximum of 70% or £77,900 for a house.
5.	<b>To limit the qualifying income threshold to join the Housing Register to the level set under the 'pay to stay' limit in the Housing and Planning Act 2016</b>	Currently households who have an income of £40k per year or more do not qualify to join the Housing Register.	To reduce the income threshold to join the Housing Register to the level set under the 'pay to stay' limit in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, which is currently £31k per year.  Only taxable income (i.e. income received for work or through investments) will count towards the £31k per year threshold and does not include any benefits that applicants may receive.  <b>How?</b>  Checks will be made at the point of registration to the Housing Register and at the offer stage to ensure households are within the income threshold.	This would mean any household with a taxable income of £31k per year or more will not qualify to join the Housing Register. The income threshold will increase annually in line with Consumer Price Inflation.  'Pay to stay' means higher income households will be required to pay higher local authority rents than lower income families.
6.	<b>Reconfiguration of the overcrowding banding priorities</b>	Currently there are 3 different priorities given to people who are living in overcrowded conditions.  1. Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded for those who are lacking 2 or more bedrooms. This also	Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded to all tenants who are lacking 2 or more bedrooms or they are assessed as being statutory overcrowded.  <b>Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to</b>	The removal of non-tenants will result in the number of households with Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' priority reducing from 798 households to 444 households.  This better reflects the overcrowding position of tenants in the city.

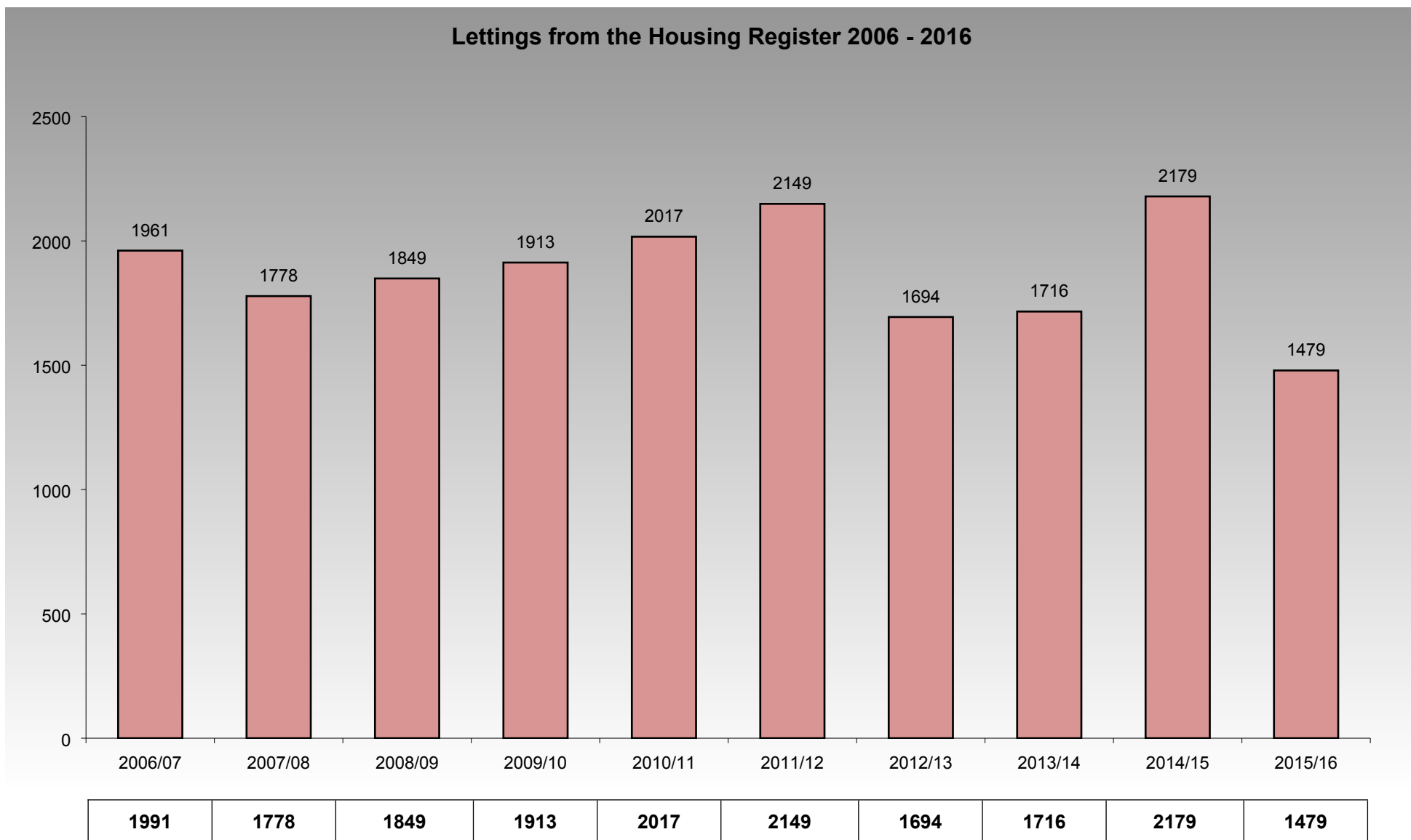
	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>What we do now</b>	<b>What we're proposing</b>	<b>Rationale for changes and the potential impact</b>
		<p>includes people who are statutory overcrowded.</p> <p>2. Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to families living in 1 bed accommodation with their children who need an additional bedroom.</p> <p>3. Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to those who are lacking 1 bedroom.</p>	<p><b>families living in 1 bedroom accommodation with children 3 years and over.</b></p> <p>Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who need 1 additional bedroom e.g. a family living in 2 bedroom accommodation needing 3 bedroom accommodation.</p> <p><b>How?</b> Any household identified on the Housing Register as being overcrowded will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	
7.	<b>Addition of a new banding priority to non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use</b>	<p>People who are non-tenants i.e. lodgers or living with friends or family are treated the same as tenants when assessing overcrowding.</p> <p>No checks are undertaken to verify or confirm the position of non-tenants joining the Housing Register and receiving this high priority.</p>	<p>Creation of a new Band 3 priority for people who are non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use.</p> <p><b>How?</b> Any applicant who is not a tenant and does not have exclusive use of bedrooms for their household will be placed in this band.</p> <p>Existing applicants who are non-tenants will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	<p>This would currently impact on 354 households who are non-tenants and awarded Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' priority. They would be re-assessed to the new Band 3 priority.</p> <p>Non-tenants who have been given notice to leave or assessed as living in insecure accommodation will be considered for Band 2 'Insecure Accommodation' priority.</p> <p>Statutory homeless households will be re-housed in the private sector unless they fall in one of the exceptions in this category.</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>
8.	<b>Reconfiguration of the under-occupation banding priorities</b>	<p>Currently there are 3 different priorities given to social tenants who are under-occupying their homes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation' is given to those social tenants who are giving up 3 bed accommodation to move to 1 bed accommodation and those giving up 2 bed accommodation to move to 1 bed accommodation.</li> <li>2. Band 1 'Tenants Incentive Scheme' is given to those social tenants giving up a large home with 4 or more bedrooms and moving to a home with 3 or fewer bedrooms.</li> <li>3. Band 2 'Under-occupation' is given to those social tenants giving up 3 bed accommodation to move to 2 bed accommodation.</li> </ol>	<p>To only have one Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation' category which is given to under-occupying social tenants who are giving up 2 or more bedrooms, those moving to 1 bed accommodation or any other social tenant who is affected by the bedroom tax following assessment.</p> <p>Band 2 is for under-occupying social tenants who do not meet the qualifying criteria for Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation'.</p> <p><b>How?</b> Any social tenant identified on the Housing Register as under-occupying will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	<p>This will make the policy on under-occupation clearer by only having one Band 1 priority as opposed to two Band 1 priorities.</p>
9.	<b>Addition of a new banding priority to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing</b>	<p>Reasonable preference is currently given for this statutory requirement within a number of different priority bandings which includes statutory homelessness, management and access and health priorities.</p>	<p>Creation of a new Band 2 priority for people who are living in insanitary or unreasonable housing for example applicant does not have access to a bathroom or kitchen, or an inside toilet, or access to hot and cold water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating as confirmed by</p>	<p>There is a statutory requirement to give reasonable preference within the allocations scheme to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing.</p> <p>This will remove incentives to apply as homeless and acknowledge the</p>

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
			<p>Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Environmental Health Officer will provide a written report to Housing Options Service confirming that a person's current accommodation is considered to be insanitary or unsatisfactory housing.</p>	<p>reasonable preference groups.</p>
10.	<p><b>To adopt the Government's Bedroom Standard which will mean persons of the same sex sharing a bedroom up to the age of 20 years</b></p>	<p>Currently the bedroom rules as used by Housing Benefit to determine how many bedrooms a household is eligible for has been adopted.</p> <p>A separate bedroom is allocated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent</li> <li>• Any other person aged 16 years or more</li> <li>• Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years</li> <li>• Each pair of people of the same sex aged under 21 years.</li> <li>• Any person who cannot be paired</li> </ul>	<p>We adopt the current Bedroom Standard as set out in the Housing Act 1985. This means two persons of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 20 years.</p> <p>A separate bedroom is allocated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent</li> <li>• Any other person aged 21 years or more</li> <li>• Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years</li> <li>• <b>Each pair of people of the same sex aged under 21 years.</b></li> <li>• Any person who cannot be paired</li> </ul> <p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Any family identified on the Housing Register with children 16 years and over will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in</p>	<p>Under the current bedroom eligibility criteria any person aged 16 years or more is allocated a separate bedroom.</p> <p>This has resulted in families with older children eligible for larger size accommodation, for example, a family with 4 children (2 daughters ages 12, 16 and 2 sons ages 14, 18) would currently be eligible for 5 bedroom accommodation.</p> <p><b>Given the shortage of large properties, families do not always want to be considered for large properties.</b></p> <p><b>They often want to be considered for a property with fewer bedrooms than they are eligible for in order to give themselves a better chance of securing an offer of accommodation.</b></p> <p>Many local authorities (see Appendix</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>
			writing.	5) have adopted the Government Bedroom Standard when determining bedroom eligibility.  <b>We will continue to allocate additional bedrooms where there is a health need or where there is a fostering arrangement in place by Leicester City Council.</b>
11.	<b>To enable applicants more choice of accommodation options on the Housing Register, households will be able to choose to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are eligible for.</b>	Households are able to apply for accommodation up to two bedrooms less than they are eligible for, providing it does not create statutory overcrowding.  Families with children also cannot apply for one bedroom accommodation.	Due to increasing need and managing customer expectations households are able to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are eligible for to prevent severe overcrowding.  <b>How?</b> Any household identified on the Housing Register who is able to apply for one less bedroom will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in writing.	Current and proposed changes to the bedroom rules seek to maximise occupancy. Allowing families the opportunity to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are currently eligible for, gives them a better chance to secure an offer of accommodation  The proposed change seeks to minimise overcrowding whilst still giving families an element of choice.  There will be however still be occasions where households will not be able to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom, for example, where a family have been awarded overcrowding priority as this would result in moving to like for like accommodation.
12.	<b>To enable applicants more choice of accommodation options on the Housing Register and to reduce the pressure on the demand for 2</b>	Families with children are not able to apply for one bedroom accommodation.	Families with 1 child aged 2 years and under are able to choose to apply for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation.	It is not unreasonable for families with 1 child under 3 years to resolve their immediate housing predicament to move to 1 bedroom

	<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>bedroom accommodation, families with 1 child aged 2 years and under will be able to choose to apply for one bedroom accommodation</b>		<p><b>How?</b> Any household identified on the Housing Register who is able to downsize will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in writing.</p>	<p>accommodation to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>This may enable them to secure accommodation quicker as there were 472 lettings of 1 bedroom flats in 2015-16. This accounted for 32% of all lettings.</p> <p>The change would allow circa 928 families with 1 child under 3 years the choice to apply for one bedroom accommodation</p>



## Current Banding Table

Band	Summary Descriptions (Reason)	Household Circumstances	Number of Households in Band (as at 01/04/2016)
Band 1	Referred Case	People in need of urgent re-housing and referred by Adult Social Care or Children's Services.	722
	Compulsory Homeless	People in need of urgent re-housing whose properties are directly affected by public redevelopment programmes.	
	Tenant Incentive Scheme	Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a large property (four bedroom or more) and who wish to move to a property with fewer bedrooms.	
	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 - see the current allocation policy, section 3.6 (available at <a href="http://leicester.gov.uk/allocations">leicester.gov.uk/allocations</a> ).	
	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.	
	Young Person Leaving Care	Children leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS).	
Band 2	Statutory Homelessness	People who are statutory homeless and are owed the full housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996.	2821
	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 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.	
	Temporary Accommodation (Single)	Single people living in designated temporary or supported accommodation.	
	Temporary Accommodation (Family)	Families living in designated temporary accommodation in the city.	



	<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	2818
	<b>Single NFA</b>	Single people who have no settled accommodation and are of 'no fixed abode'.	
	<b>Care &amp; Support Medical</b>	Families needing to move to a particular area of Leicester where hardship would be caused if they do not move.	
	<b>Overcrowded Household</b>	Families who are living in overcrowded conditions under Leicester City Council's overcrowding standard (one bedroom short of their assessed need).	
	<b>Working Households</b>	Working households or those in local training schemes who need to move closer to their job/training scheme	
<b>Band 4</b>	<b>Sharing Facilities</b>	People who share facilities with other households but have their own bedroom.	2191
	<b>Care &amp; Support Emotional</b>	People who need to move to, or remain in, a particular area of Leicester to give or receive emotional support from family, friends or others in the community.	
	<b>Sheltered Accommodation</b>	People over the age of 50 years requesting 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation only.	
<b>Band 5*</b>	<b>All Other Applicants</b>	People who do not have any of the housing circumstances listed in bands 1, 2, 3 and 4.	2597

\* With effect from 1st May 2014 no new applicants are accepted into Band 5

## Proposed Banding Table

Band	Summary Descriptions (Reason)	Household Circumstances	Expected Number of Households in Proposed Bands (based on waiting list as at 01/04/2016)
Band 1	Referred Case	People in need of urgent re-housing and referred by Adult Social Care or Children's Services.	722
	Compulsory Homeless	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.	
	Young Person Leaving Care	Children leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS).	
Band 2	Statutory Homelessness	People who are statutory homeless and are owed the full housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996.	2821
	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.	
	Temporary Accommodation (Single)	Single people living in designated temporary or supported accommodation.	
	Temporary Accommodation (Family)	Families living in designated temporary accommodation in the city.	
	Insanitary or Unsatisfactory Accommodation	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.	3223
	<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	Bedroom Rules	Do people with no housing need or low need qualify to go on the Housing Register?
Derby City Council	2	Adult/Children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom (no upper age limit)	No
Nottingham City Council	5	Adult/Children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 20 years	No
Northampton Borough Council	3	Adult/Children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 20 years	No

## **SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM THE STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

### **Total Responses Received**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent of All</b>
Member of the public	15	32%
Applicant currently on the Housing Register	26	56%
Housing Association representative	1	2%
Voluntary organisation representative	2	4%
Support organisation representative	3	6%
Not answered	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **1. Do you agree with the proposal for the removal of Band 4 applicants from the Housing Register?**

### **Number of Responses Received**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
It won't affect me / us / my clients	16	34%
It will affect me / us / my clients in a positive way	8	17%
It will affect me / us / my clients in a negative way	16	34%
I have no opinion	4	8%
Not applicable	1	2%
Not answered	2	4%

### **Feedback**

#### Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We agree that housing should go to those in greatest need and that it is important therefore to manage the expectations of those on the Housing Register. The proposed move to having just three bands on the Register makes sense if this will reduce the amount of time spent on administering the system. It is important however that the time freed up as a result of this change is used in other areas, for example, on verifying information provided by applicants. This would result in this change being a positive move for Registered Providers'.*

#### Support Organisation (name not given)

*'Many people will begin in Band 4 and then either move to Band 3 (e.g. when they have a child) or Band 2 for temp accom. This helps people at least get their housing application up and running. Some single people have received offers of accommodation, especially bedsits, in Band 4, so wouldn't this mean a potential increase in failed nominations, poorer relations with RSLs, and increase in void times for hard to let properties?'*

*'Will any of these cases who are currently in Band 4 for sharing be eligible for the Band 3 sheltered only priority or the Band 3 Care & Support and will/how will they be assessed for these before removal from Housing register?'*

*Will the care and support/emotional cases automatically be transferred into Band 3 or will they be removed from the register, or have to provide additional proof to get into Band 3 on care and support grounds?'*

#### The Race Equality Centre (Voluntary Organisation)

*'Majority of our service users are under 30, and will be threatened with homelessness after moving out of their NASS accommodation and have been living in shared facilities. Some are rehoused in shared accommodation through Action homeless accommodation and they will be at disadvantage.'*

*Refugees are vulnerable group and this will have a huge impact on their health and ability to secure private rented accommodation due to barriers they will face in accessing a deposit and high rents'.*

#### General Public (Representative Sample)

*'I am currently placed in band 4 and have been waiting for housing for over 1 year. My circumstances have changed and I have notified the council. My band has not been reassessed yet. If they remove band 4 from the list, where does that leave people like me?'*

*'The change would expel me from getting help from the council whom are suppose to help people like myself.'*

*'I'm in band four and been bidding. I've been getting offers in the past. Also the positions I'm getting in are close'.*

*'It will easy to get house because our family is in band 2 and we have registered in June 2015, its around 1 year and six months but i have not offered any property yet. So, it will great to remove those applicant who as very low chance to get house'.*

*'There council and housing association will have less administrative duties which will result in money being saved this will enable the council to spend money on properties and other projects e.g. New builds'.*

*'Some support I can only get in certain areas and as a single mum will health issues as well as serious mental health people should be allowed to live where the support is close to them'.*

*'I believe as it is self-explained by you that applicant in Band 4 have a very least chance for offer of accommodation - as this is causing build up of more burden on to your management'*

*and financial crisis occurrence, the best would be to get rid of band 4 - then as it is not giving any benefit neither to applicant nor to the council management'.*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

It is acknowledged this will remove circa 4300 households in Bands 4 & 5 from the Housing Register. However the change will make it easier to manage customer expectations and will reduce the administrative burden on the service. Resources will also be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.

Where there has been a change in circumstances, applications will be re-assessed under the criteria of the higher banding priorities.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to remove all households in Bands 4 & 5 who have no or little housing need from the Housing Register.

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## 2. Do you agree with the proposal to limit the qualifying income threshold to join the Housing Register?

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### Number of Responses Received

Impact	Number of Responses	%
It won't affect me / us / my clients	26	55%
It will affect me / us / my clients in a positive way	7	15%
It will affect me / us / my clients in a negative way	6	13%
I have no opinion	3	6%
Not applicable	3	6%
Not answered	2	4%

### Feedback

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We recognise that these proposals may be subject to change following the announcement re the Pay to Stay proposals at the Autumn Statement.*

*Whilst we agree with the importance of ensuring that social housing is provided to those that cannot afford other options, we believe the proposed move to a £31,000 threshold would have a negative impact. Depending on the area, it can be very difficult to get suitable properties with such an income. It would be useful to approach local lenders in Leicester to see what mortgage options would be available for a household earning £31,000, and what sorts of properties they would be able to afford.*

*This is especially likely to have a negative impact on vulnerable members of the community who may happen to earn more than £31,000. For example, a tenant with a disability earning just over the threshold may find it hard to get a suitable adapted property in the private sector with such an income.*

*Will household income also take into account assets? If so, it may be appropriate to apply a degree of discretion for elderly applicants who are more likely to have a higher level of assets. It can be difficult to attract applicants to CAT 1 & 2 properties, so this may limit the number of suitable applicants for such schemes.*

*This proposal also relies on having up to date information about household income. This is likely to require a significant amount of resources in order to ensure that the data is accurate'.*

Support Organisation (name not given)

*Will this change at all given that pay to stay has been withdrawn. £40,000 still seems a large amount, if this is now going to remain the same. How will proof of financial resources be provided by the applicants? Couldn't people easily withhold information regarding savings or income? Will this result in a greater number of proofs being needed from customers and*



*more difficulties/barriers for customers getting their applications registered, and increased time spent on applications by staff?’*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*‘It should be considered that families on lower income margin to be significantly prioritized; circumstances may include: families with children’s and older people carriage with regards and also regardless of any health needs. emitting some better choice to rehouse such family. although people with more optimum needs should be given first opportunity but, to focus extra sometime also on to the other needy requirement and facilitate them equally in a limited timescale’.*

*‘I think this is wrong and you are encouraging people not to work as sometime I believe people on benefits get as much as someone on a low income. I do agree should have a cut off but 40,000 seems fairer as I think as with it being 30,000 I can see private landlords increasing the rent and making people live on unaffordable housing’.*

*‘I think that the financial threshold should be lowered to the suggested amount’.*

*‘Social housing for people who are of low incomes is what it was originally set up for’.*

*‘I believe that this change will is a effective way to move forward. Council and housing association homes should only be let out to families and people who are on low income and cannot afford to buy or rent in the open market’.*

*‘Would need to be aware of charges made by private landlords to make sure that people in that income threshold would not be financially disadvantaged due to high rents/charges’.*

**Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

Whilst it is noted that the Government has now withdrawn the income threshold from its ‘Pay to Stay’ proposal in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, **In light of the consultation feedback, it is still recommended to proceed with the proposal** to reduce the current qualifying income threshold to join the Housing Register, to ensure that social housing is allocated to those most in need and who require affordable housing due to income levels.

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### 3. Do you agree with the proposal for the reconfiguration of the overcrowding banding priorities?

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#### Number of Responses Received

Impact	Number of Responses	%
It won't affect me / us	21	45%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	7	15%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	8	17%
I have no opinion	8	17%
Not applicable	1	2%
Not answered	2	4%

#### Feedback

##### Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We do not agree with the proposal to allow families with a child under the age of three to live in a one bedroom property. We believe that this would be a short term solution that would actually create further overcrowding situations in the future. This is also likely to increase the turnover at properties, resulting in an increase in voids and letting costs.'*

*'From a RP point of view, a large number of our one bed properties may be unsuitable for families with young children due to floor level, storage for prams etc. Storing such equipment in corridors would be a fire hazard. RPs are expected to follow strict regulations regarding health and safety and fire, and we believe moving more young families into one bed properties may increase the risk of such an incident.'*

##### Support Organisation (name not given)

*'Children aged 3 should be sleeping in a bed not a cot - how would this work in a 1 bedroom situation?'*

##### Support Organisation (name not given)

*'Non-tenants will be affected who are overcrowded by more than 1 bedroom, as they will only go into Band 3. This seems unfair as tenants in the same overcrowded circumstance are given the Band 2 priority.'*

*'There is the proposal to only award severe overcrowding priority to tenants. This means presumably that people lodging/living with relatives who are overcrowded by 2 bedrooms or more will now only be eligible for Band 3 priority. This seems unfair, as surely a tenant living in accommodation and needing more than 2 bedrooms more than they have is in a better situation than someone who doesn't even rent their own home, they have to share facilities too? The rationale given is 'This better reflects the overcrowding position of tenants in the*

*City', but what about the many non-tenants? Why are they being put at a disadvantage, when they are in the same if not worse circumstances? Other rationale given is that they will be awarded insecure accommodation if relevant, but for the 354 cases specified, they do not have this priority at present, so assuming they would all drop to Band 3? Will it put pressure on the service in terms of receiving asked to leave letters, completing home visits, taking decs, etc?'*

#### General Public (Representative Sample)

'Would effect only - if the length of time in getting rehoused are far extended. this means in today's date even band 2 applicant are undergoing long waiting time in getting a swift offer as per their bid, and the property they do bid by checking the previous property list. what we see is that accommodation bided three to four months are still under process for a offer or awaiting allocation'.

'I'm currently a single mother in a one bed first floor flat with a 18 month old and another child due next year my flat is smile and struggling for space i would like a additional room for my two children and ground floor as i struggle to carry my son up the stairs and its going to be even more of a struggle with two children'.

'Situation doesn't change'.

#### **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

The register of housing need should reflect applicants' current housing circumstances and it is misleading to categorise those who do not have their own accommodation as overcrowded in the same way as tenants. Removing non-tenants from the current overcrowding banding priorities will enable us to accurately record and monitor overcrowding of tenants in the city.

The proposal to allow families with a child under 3 to be allocated 1 bed accommodation will only be used on a choice based approach whereby applicants can choose to be rehoused into accommodation with one less bedroom than they are currently eligible for. Given the shortage of larger size accommodation the change will assist those families that choose to downsize a better chance of securing an offer of accommodation which for those who choose this option it will resolve immediate housing need, prevent impending homelessness and provide housing resolutions for those who are without secure accommodation.

Occupancy levels on individual properties will not be exceeded with this change.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to reconfigure the overcrowding banding priorities.

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**4. Do you agree with the proposal for the addition of a new banding priority to non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use?**

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**Number of Responses Received**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
It won't affect me / us	22	47%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	5	11%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	10	21%
I have no opinion	6	13%
Not applicable	2	4%
Not answered	2	4%

**Feedback**

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We agree with this proposal.'*

Support Organisation (name not given)

*'Tenants are being given an unfair advantage over non-tenants.'*

*'There is the proposal to only award severe overcrowding priority to tenants. This means presumably that people lodging/living with relatives who are overcrowded by 2 bedrooms or more will now only be eligible for Band 3 priority. This seems unfair, as surely a tenant living in accommodation and needing more than 2 bedrooms more than they have is in a better situation than someone who doesn't even rent their own home, they have to share facilities too? The rationale given is 'This better reflects the overcrowding position of tenants in the City', but what about the many non-tenants? Why are they being put at a disadvantage, when they are in the same if not worse circumstances? Other rationale given is that they will be awarded insecure accommodation if relevant, but for the 354 cases specified, they do not have this priority at present, so assuming they would all drop to Band 3? Will it put pressure on the service in terms of receiving asked to leave letters, completing home visits, taking decs, etc?'*

The Race Equality Centre (Voluntary Organisation)

*'Some of our clients who are single and not in priority need become homeless from their NASS accommodation end up moving into their friends accommodation until they find permanent accommodation so to prevent street homelessness. They will be moved from band 2 to band 3. This will create street homelessness as they will have to wait longer to get rehoused and their friends will not allow them to stop in their property for too long.'*

## General Public (Representative Sample)

*'We have been waiting for 5years and people can say they are homeless and go in front of us so good if you could do something about it'.*

*'We are overcrowded our self's and have my mother in law living with us as she was made homeless and had no where else to go so this would benefit us both. It's a great idea'.*

*'I don't think the creation of a priority band 3 should be made'.*

*'I honestly think this will not only let people take the Mik out of the sistum because of the no check out and make it harder for those who are in real life trouble'.*

*'This does seem fairer'.*

*'I am concerned that under the current system "No checks are undertaken to verify..." '.*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

The register of housing need should reflect applicants' current housing circumstances and it is misleading to categorise those who do not have their own accommodation as overcrowded in the same way as tenants. We need to make key changes to accurately record and monitor overcrowding in the city and also to reflect the number of households who do not have their own accommodation.

In response to The Race Equality Centre comments, single people living with friends without their own bedroom currently get a Band 3 priority so there would be no change in their current banding priority.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** that non-tenants are given a separate overcrowding banding priority to tenants.

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5. Do you agree with the proposal for the reconfiguration of the under-occupation banding priorities?

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**Number of Responses Received**

Impact	Number of Responses	%
It won't affect me / us	22	47%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	11	23%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	2	4%
I have no opinion	6	13%
Not applicable	4	8%
Not answered	2	4%

**Feedback**

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We agree with this proposal'.*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*'Stick with your said proposal'.*

*'I support this change'.*

**Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

This change will make the policy easier to administer and understand.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to reconfigure the under-occupation banding priorities.

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**6. Do you agree with the proposal for the addition of a new banding priority to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing?**

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**Number of Responses Received**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
It won't affect me / us	25	53%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	7	15%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	4	8%
I have no opinion	7	15%
Not applicable	2	4%
Not answered	2	4%

**Feedback**

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We believe that people falling under this category should be placed into Band one due to their circumstances'.*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*'Everyone should be able to live in a clean and safe environment'.*

*'I'm not against it'.*

*'Stick with your said proposal'.*

**Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

This change will make the policy compliant with statutory guidance. Band 2 priority is appropriate in relation to other banding priorities set out in the allocations policy.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to give priority to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing.

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## 7. Do you agree with the proposal to adopt the Government's Bedroom Standard?

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### Number of Responses Received

Impact	Number of Responses	%
It won't affect me / us	21	45%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	10	21%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	7	15%
I have no opinion	3	6%
Not applicable	4	8%
Not answered	2	4%

### Feedback

#### Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We believe that the proposals should be in line with the Government's Welfare Reform Act 2012 – and the rules set out in the "Under occupation penalty/Removal of spare room subsidy".'*

#### General Public (Representative Sample)

*'At present I have a son age 5 and a daughter age 9. I pay a bedroom tax anyway so I'm unsure if this would affect me. If I were told I would have to downsize and my children would have to share a room after not sharing for so long this would cause much hassle between them. I have also spent a lot of money decorating and would be very unhappy if I was told I was going to have to give up all I had done and spend money moving. As my daughter is 10 in 6 months it is unlikely that I would move anyway as I would then have to move again. But for people with younger children this would be unfair  
If new tenants will be allocated in this way then that is fine as it is all new for them anyway. I think for tenants that are settled they shouldn't have to move in all circumstances'.*

*'I have one bedroom which i share with my daughter and its too small so it would be good to get two rooms'.*

*'Approve of this proposal as if a family own their own home they make do and work around these situations. This is a fairer way to room allocation'.*

*'There is no real difference between a 16 yr old and 21 yrs old person in my opinion. as both age are well grown up for sharing a bedroom'.*

*'This is a very good idea'.*

*'If the family intend to have a shorter bedroom apart from their requirement and they do take such responsibility on themselves - then a shorter bedroom should be granted or made*



*eligible to them, i.e ; people with grandparents, parents and themselves (two sibling) of either sex male/ female are made eligible for a 4 bed house, unluckily one of the grandparent becomes disable and wheel chair - bound or non - ambulant by obtaining proof from the social care their need are accessed they are all now in band 1 eligible for 4 bed wheel chair adapted accommodation such properties are rarely advertised - in simple ways such applicant should be allocated a alternate three bed house with 10 person occupancy; if available based on their written request'.*

*'I support this change'.*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

This change will assist families with older children to apply for more appropriate size accommodation given the shortage of larger size accommodation that becomes available.

We will also continue to allocate additional bedrooms where there is a health need or where there is a fostering arrangement in place by Leicester City Council.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to adopt the current Government's bedroom standard.

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8. Do you agree with the proposal to provide more choice of accommodation options for households?

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**Number of Responses Received**

Impact	Number of Responses	%
It won't affect me / us	21	45%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	8	17%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	6	13%
I have no opinion	7	15%
Not applicable	3	6%
Not answered	2	4%

**Feedback**

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We believe allowing households to apply for a property that has one less bedroom than they need is likely to be a short term solution that will not provide RPs with sustainable tenancies – resulting in greater turnover and higher letting costs'.*

Support Organisation (name not given)

*'This does not seem an improvement as currently allow people to apply for accommodation with 2 less bedrooms. Actually giving less choice to people. Even taking into account the change in the bedroom sharing rules, people needing larger family homes may be restricted. It does minimise overcrowding in their new accommodation, however wording the proposed change as enabling applicants more choice seems incorrect as this is clearly not the case'.*

The Race Equality Centre (Voluntary Organisation)

*'Better opportunity for families waiting for four/five bedrooms. This will allow the families to bid for 3 bed properties'.*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*'This is a good proposal'.*

*'This is one of the best that will race forth - and would make many families happier on the waiting list should their needs are re-accessed'.*

*'Will take me and my family longer to obtain a property'.*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

The proposal will be a choice based approach whereby applicants can choose to be rehoused into accommodation with one less bedroom than they are currently eligible for. Given the shortage of larger size accommodation the change will assist those families that choose to downsize a better chance of securing an offer of accommodation.

The proposal also seeks to minimise overcrowding whilst still giving families an element of choice.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to allow families the choice of applying for accommodation that is one bedroom less than they are eligible for.

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**9. Do you agree with the proposal to provide more choice of accommodation options for for Families with one child on the Housing Register?**

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**Number of Responses Received**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
It won't affect me / us	24	51%
It will affect me / us in a positive way	6	13%
It will affect me / us in a negative way	3	6%
I have no opinion	9	17%
Not applicable	2	4%
Not answered	3	6%

**Feedback**

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'Following on from the answers to previous question around this, we believe that this will result in short term tenancies that will be harder to manage'.*

Support Organisation (name not given)

*'This could begin as a positive for people, but if they are then still looking for 2 bedroom accommodation and knowing the shortage of 2 beds, they could find themselves stuck in 1 bedroom accommodation. Similarly if they have more children, could find themselves stuck in 1 bedroom accommodation'.*

The Race Equality Centre (Voluntary Organisation)

*'Again positive move as 2 bed accommodation is not easily available. At least one bed accommodation will assist with a roof over their head. Less use of Border House accommodation while waiting for 2 bed accommodation which will prevent waste of council resources'.*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*'They only have one child so one bedroom should be sufficient as two bedroom houses can be provided for people that really need them and require two bedrooms instead of families having an extra room just in case they have another child'.*

*'Will take longer for me and my family to be rehoused'.*

*'The choice should be given to families in what accommodation they would be happy to reside in'.*

*'It will make accommodation more affordable and give people an idea of how much it will cost to leave independently'.*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

The proposal will be a choice based approach whereby applicants with a child under 3 years can choose to be rehoused into 1 bedroom accommodation. Given the high demand for 2 bedroom accommodation with average waiting times of approximately 15 months which is expected to rise higher for Band 2 applicants, the change will give those families that choose to apply for one bedroom accommodation, a better chance of securing an offer of accommodation and resolve their immediate housing predicament.

**In light of the consultation feedback, it is recommended there is no change to the proposal** to allow families with one child 2 years and under, the choice of applying for 1 or 2 bedroom accommodation.

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## 10. General Comments

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### Feedback

Waterloo Housing Group (Registered Provider)

*'We are keen to work with Leicester City Council on their proposals and would be happy to come to talk to you to discuss our comments in greater detail.'*

Support Organisation (name not given)

*'Does the reduction in the number of bands to just 3 result in increased pressure on each of those bands, with many applications with many different housing needs within that same band, for example is it right to say that someone who needs to move on care & support grounds would have the same level of housing need as someone who is single and sofa surfing?'*

*'Removal of home owners/owner occupiers - Who are the exceptions and how will they be identified before being removed from the housing register?'*

General Public (Representative Sample)

*'Agree with all proposals they seem fair, measured and will go some way to meeting the housing need in the City.'*

*'People need housing and the council can help people the ranking system can be disheartening as only aloud to apply for 3 properties and they should be allowed to seek all if placed in the area required. Kicking people like myself off the chance of a steady home.'*

*'I have highlighted some more key areas in this survey that certainly need to be furnished appropriately being well designed- and the timescale for any lettings to be made quicker for applicant to enjoy in their new home.'*

*'All of the proposed changes seem eminently sensible.'*

*'Doesn't seem to help single adults who are looking to improve their housing needs.'*

*'You should give long term residents of Leicester a priority.'*

*'Looking into the allocation process is a very good idea these proposals would look good but you also need to think about people with disabilities too and when allocating flats, bungalows would be a better option.'*

## **Response**

Comments noted from stakeholder partners and customers.

The proposed changes will ensure that the policy addresses those most in need as well as helping the policy be more transparent, simplified and easier to understand by all.

The changes will also better manage customer expectations and reduce the administrative burden on the service and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.