

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 12 March 2019

Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning

Heading: Common Housing Allocation Policy – Council Targets for 2019/20

1. Summary

- 1.1 Following approval by the Policy Board in January 2019, the new Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy will be implemented in Spring this year by the Council and its housing association partners.
 - 1.2 As with the current policy, applicants are placed in one of five groups according to their circumstances, and targets are set for the proportion of lets to each group. These targets are set and reviewed annually by each landlord. This report contains proposed targets for 2019/20 for the Council. The Council's current policy and targets will remain in place until the new common policy is implemented later this year.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy Board:
 - (i) approves the Council's allocation targets for 2019/20 as set out in Section 4 of this report; and
 - (ii) notes that allocation targets will be reviewed and reported annually to the Policy Board.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 In January 2019 the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board approved the Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy and agreed that the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services should prepare allocation targets and report these to the Policy Board for approval prior to implementation of the new policy.
- 3.2 As detailed in previous reports to the Policy Board, under the proposed new policy, applicants will be placed into one of the following five groups based on their circumstances. Depending on the group applicants are placed in, a level of priority ('A' to 'C') may also be awarded. Targets are set for the proportion of lets to each group, and as properties become available for let, applicants are selected from the five groups according to these targets.

Statutory Homeless Group	Mobility Group (general and transfer applicants)	General Applicants Group (not landlord's own tenants)	Transfer Applicants Group - with housing need	Transfer Applicants Group - no housing need
Statutory homeless	A critical need B urgent need C moderate need D no need	A critical need B urgent need C moderate need D no need	A critical need B urgent need C moderate need	Based on date of application

- 3.3 The Council and its four housing association partners (Bridgewater, Linstone, Paisley and Williamsburgh) will use the same groups, but each landlord will set its own targets, taking account of the profile of its Housing List and housing stock.

4. Council Allocations Targets for 2019/20

- 4.1 The Council and other social landlords have a statutory duty to give reasonable preference to people in housing need (people who are homeless, living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and tenants of social landlords who are underoccupying their current home). The targets set for each group need to take account of this duty.
- 4.2 The proposed targets for 2019/20 have been informed by analysis of the Council's housing list and lettings over the last few years. The key points to note are:
- There are around 5,500 applicants on the Council's Housing List
 - The Council re-lets around 1,000 properties each year
 - Most of these lets are made through the group system (93% in 2017/18)
 - There will be no change to the way applicants are assessed and placed in the Statutory Homeless and Mobility groups.

- At 32%, the proportion of lets to **Statutory Homeless** applicants in 2017/18 was below the target of 35%. This figure has increased during 2018/19 and is currently sitting at just under 36%.
 - Lets to **Mobility** applicants have represented between 9% and 10% of lets by the Council over the last three years. (This figure is constrained by the suitability of available stock and a property-led approach is used to maximise opportunities to let suitable properties to applicants with mobility needs.)
 - Under the new policy, existing Council tenants will be held in one of two groups – **Transfer Applicants with housing need** and **Transfer Applicants with no housing need**. At present, transfer applicants make up just under a quarter of all applicants on the Council's list. Transfer applicants with housing need make up around 13% of all applicants.
 - Applicants who are not currently Council tenants and are not homeless or have mobility needs, will be held in the **General Applicants** group. This is the largest group of applicants, currently around two-thirds of all applicants on the list, and includes both people with housing need and with no housing need. Applicants with need in this group represent around 25% of all applicants.
- 4.3 Taking account of the above information, and the duty to give reasonable preference to housing need, initial targets for 2019/20 are set out in the table below. These will be reviewed following the first year of operation.
- 4.4 These targets are broadly in line with previous patterns of letting and will continue to make best use of the properties that are available for let. Setting the target to 37% will assist the Council to meet statutory obligations to homeless people and reduce time spent in temporary accommodation. The target of 10% for lets to transfer applicants with no housing need will enable existing Council tenants to move home and may facilitate subsequent vacant properties being allocated to other applicants with housing need.

Statutory Homeless Group	Mobility Group <i>(general and Council transfer applicants)</i>	General Applicants Group <i>(not existing Council tenants)</i>	Council Transfer Applicants Group - with housing need <i>(existing Council tenants)</i>	Transfer Applicants Group - no housing need <i>(existing Council tenants)</i>
37%	10%	28%	15%	10%

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Staff resource requirements and ICT amendments will be delivered within existing resources and programmes.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - **Our Renfrewshire is thriving** – Meeting the needs of Housing Applicants
 - **Building strong, safe and resilient communities** – Creating strong communities in our approach to allocating homes
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** – An update is required to OHMS to ensure the effective operation of the new Common Housing Allocation Policy. ICT are aware of this and are working on the necessary upgrade to the system to ensure its delivered in time for implementation of the new policy.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – In accordance with the draft 'Housing Allocation in Renfrewshire: Information Sharing Protocol', it is anticipated that the Council will be working with various organisations to ensure the efficient processing of housing applications and will require to share information, including Personal Data in order to do so. It is now a statutory requirement for the Council to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment ("**DPIA**"). Officers will liaise with the Information Governance Team to complete a DPIA which will enable the Council to anticipate and address the likely privacy risks and impacts from collecting, using and disclosing personal information in the course of this initiative, foreseeable problems and negotiate solutions to ensure data protection compliance and privacy concerns are addressed appropriately.
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – None.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy board on 15 January 2019, 'Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy'.
- (b) Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 21 August 2018, 'Draft Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy and Update on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014'.
- (c) Report to the Communities, Housing Planning Policy Board on 07 November 2017, 'Housing (Scotland) Act 2014: Part 2 Social Housing'.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities, Housing and Planning Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Lesley Muirhead, Planning and Housing Manager, 0141 618 6259, email: lesley.muirhead@renfrewshire.gov.uk

FC/LM
18 February 2019

Author: *Lesley Muirhead, Planning and Housing Manager, 0141 618 6259, email: lesley.muirhead@renfrewshire.gov.uk*