



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Kelham Hall
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Chairman: Councillor R.B. Laughton
Vice-Chairman: Councillor T. Wendels

Members of the Committee:

Councillor Mrs K. Arnold

Councillor Mrs B.M. Brooks

Councillor Mrs C. Brooks*

Councillor G. Brooks

Councillor Mrs I Brown

Councillor M. Buttery

Councillor K. Girling

Councillor Mrs S.M. Michael

Councillor D. Thompson

Councillor K. Walker

Substitutes:

Councillor D. Batey

Councillor Mrs G.E. Dawn

Councillor J. Lee

Councillor Mrs P. Rainbow

Councillor Mrs S. Soar

AGENDA

MEETING: Homes & Communities Committee

DATE: Monday, 21 March 2016 at 6.00pm

VENUE: Room G21, Kelham Hall

**You are hereby requested to attend the above Meeting to be held at the time/place
and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the
business on the Agenda as overleaf.**

If you have any queries please contact Helen Brandham on 01636 655248.

AGENDA

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NCC 2016/17 Budget Consultation
Option for Change Public Health Grant Realignment Changes for Homelessness Services

CONFIDENTIAL AND EXEMPT ITEMS

None

NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held on Monday, 18th January 2016 in Room G21, Kelham Hall at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R.B. Laughton (Chairman)
Councillor T. Wendels (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs K. Arnold, Mrs B.M. Brooks, Mrs. C. Brooks, Mrs I. Brown, M. Buttery, K. Girling and Mrs S.M. Michael.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors: P.C. Duncan and Mrs P. Rainbow

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors: G. Brooks, D. Thompson and K. Walker.

37. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED: that the following Member declared an interest in the item shown below:

Councillor Mrs S.M. Michael Agenda Item No. 7 – Affordable Housing Delivery (Disclosable Pecuniary Interest – Joint Landowner of site in Caunton which is subject to a future rural scheme for affordable housing).

38. DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED: that there would be an audio recording of the meeting.

39. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH NOVEMBER 2015

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

40. HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 – 2020/21

The Committee considered the report presented by the Assistant Business Manager – Financial Services which provided information on the budget and scales of fees and charges for the areas that fell within the remit of the Committee for 2016/2017 and future years.

It was reported that the final budget would be presented to the Policy & Finance Committee in February together with any comments or recommendations from this Committee. Members were advised that there had been little change to the budget proposals since they had last considered them in November 2015. Members noted that the overall saving to the Council, as a result of devolution, was £440k

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the final Committee budget be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 25th February 2016 for inclusion in the overall Council budget; and
- (b) the scales of fees and charges be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 25th February 2016 and Council on 10th March 2016.

41. CHANGE TO OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR HOUSEHOLDS IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Housing Options, Energy & Home Support in relation to the proposed change in operational procedures taking into account recent case law from the UK Supreme Court, which no longer required Local Housing Authorities (LHA) to seek court orders to remove the provision of temporary accommodation for households who, under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996, were considered not to be owed the main housing duty.

The report set out the legislative threshold for determining whether the local housing authority had a duty to provide temporary accommodation and the current operational procedures when those duties had ceased. The report also provided statistical information as to the number of cases where court action had been taken over the previous 2 years.

Members noted that not having to apply to the Courts for an Order to evict was to be welcomed and queried what the revised process would be. In response, they were advised that the applicant/household would be given a date by which they must vacate the premises and failure to do so would result in the Council instructing bailiffs. This was similar to the current process but the application to the Courts had been removed as this was not now necessary. Members were also informed as to the criteria that must be met to enable an applicant/household to be offered temporary accommodation and also the various reasons why the agreements were terminated.

In relation to whether a case would ever arise where no period of notice was given, Members were advised that it would have to be an extreme case to warrant that approach and it was the Council's intention to maintain the 28 day notice period, adding the Council also operated an internal appeal process available to the applicant/household.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the Committee support the proposed change in operational procedures.

Councillor Mrs S.M. Michael left the meeting during discussion of the following item having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

42. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Strategic Housing in relation to an update on affordable housing delivery across the district and to advise on the pending changes to national housing and planning policies.

Contained within the report was the current policy and strategic background that enabled the delivery of affordable housing to meet the evidenced housing need across the district. Also contained within the report was information in relation to housing need; affordable housing delivery; national policy; and development costs.

It was noted that the Council had developed 77 new Council homes across the district, over a period of 5 years.

In relation to the Right to Buy, it was noted that legislation set out that a tenant must be resident for a period of 3 years before they could apply to buy their property.

Members agreed that the information in the report was to be welcomed but there was still insufficient affordable housing to meet the need within the district. It was noted that the Government's proposed 4 year 1% rent reduction would impact greatly on Council finances. Officers advised that reports would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee once full details had been provided.

A Member of the Committee referred to the affordable housing scheme for 71 units on Sleaford Road, Newark. Whilst in support of the application the Member queried why the Ward Members had not been aware of the application and why it had been determined under delegated powers to Officers with the Member seeking assurances that this would not occur again in the future.

AGREED (unanimously) that the information supplied relating to the affordable housing delivery in the district be noted.

43. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE – MID-YEAR UPDATE 2015/2016

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Policy & Performance in relation to performance information falling under the remit of the Housing & Communities Committee. The report set out the performance information using a traffic light indicator status with additional narrative provided by the relevant Business Manager.

Members agreed that they had reviewed recently the information contained within the appendix to the report and wished to continue to receive information on the chosen basket of performance indicators.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

44. ROUGH SLEEPERS IN NEWARK & SHERWOOD

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Housing Options, Energy and Home Support in relation to the increase in rough sleeping in the Newark & Sherwood area and the local provision of services and support available for the vulnerable individuals involved.

The report provided information as to the estimated number of rough sleepers in the district during 2015 and the methodology used to calculate the figure which had been ascertained to be 10. Also provided were details of the local provision made for rough sleepers in severe weather. Details of a personalised pilot approach being undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) were provided alongside the broader picture of what challenges were ahead and how the Housing & Planning Bill 2015, the Welfare to Work Bill 2015/16 and the further roll out of Universal Credit might impact on homelessness and rough sleeping.

Members noted the number of cases of rough sleepers that were difficult to house. A Member advised that he was aware of an individual that had been sleeping in a car since October 2015 and because of that he was unable to secure employment as he had no permanent address. He also advised that his health was suffering as a consequence of his situation. In response, the Business Manager requested that the Member provide her with further details in order that she could look into the matter and see whether this individual was known to the Council.

A Member queried whether there would be an issue with single occupancy discounts for Council Tax being withdrawn should someone offer accommodation to a rough sleeper. The Business Manager advised that she would look further into the issue.

Members agreed that the volunteers who assisted when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated and those involved with the Individual Mentoring Partners and Churches Together (IMPACT) were to be congratulated and that the CSP Pilot looked to be worthwhile. They asked that they be kept informed of the progress of this.

Members noted that IMPACT had approached the Council requesting them to consider whether a small donation to support its work could be given with all Members in agreement that they would support this request.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) a small one off donation to IMPACT be provided in order to recognise and support their work to the increasing numbers of rough sleepers in the district.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm

Chairman

UPDATE ON THE CO-LOCATION OF SHERWOOD AND NEWARK CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU FROM KEEPERS COTTAGE, NEWARK TO THE NEW COUNCIL OFFICES.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the proposed co-location of the Sherwood and Newark Citizens Bureau (CAB) from Keepers Cottage, Newark to the new council offices and for Members to agree to the change in the amount of concession the Council provide towards their accommodation.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Council owns Keepers Cottage and currently both the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and the CAB commenced delivering a service from it in January 2013. The TIC is due to move to the Visitor Information Centre late March 2016.
- 2.2 As detailed in the business case which was presented to Policy & Finance Committee on 17 July 2015 it was identified that there is a clear commonality of customers between the Council, the Department of Work and Pensions – Job Centre (DWP) and the CAB, with a high proportion of customers being visitors to all three of the services. Locating these services in one location will ultimately provide customers with a more holistic and consistent service and as the roll-out of Universal Credit continues this will become even more important.
- 2.3 The DWP is already committed to co-locating to the new council offices and the CAB have confirmed that dependent upon costs they would like to co-locate into the new building.

3.0 CAB Requirements and Financial Implications

- 3.1 In 2012 the market rent of Keepers Cottage was £10,000 per annum. Given that part of the premises is occupied by the TIC, the market rental in respect of the remainder of the premises which is occupied by the CAB is £8,000 per annum. The Council give the CAB a concession of £6000, meaning that the CAB pays £2,000 rent per annum.
- 3.2 The CAB also pays 80% of the service charge. For 2014/15 this equated to them paying £4,271.82 (non-vatable). The total charge the CAB paid for Keepers Cottage for 2014/15 was £6,271.82.
- 3.3 Initial discussions with the CAB have indicated that they would require 11 desks in the back office. Through on-going discussions with the CAB the number of desks they require has reduced to 7. The individual desk charge for the new offices is £4,350 which equates to the CAB being eligible to pay £30,450 – an increase of £24,178.18. Please note that this figure is an estimate as it is based on the 2014/15 service charge. The CAB has very limited funding and is not in a position to pay this additional cost and is therefore requesting a rent concession to bring the rent payable back in line to the amount currently charged.

- 3.4 In addition to the rent concession, the district council pay an annual grant of £68,330 to the Sherwood and Newark CAB which is the sum of the grants formerly paid to Newark CAB and Ollerton CAB. In 2013/14 and 2014/15 this grant was increased by £30,000 to include set up costs of the new CAB with agreement that this would be reduced by £10,000 per annum between 2015/16 and 2017/18, bringing the grant back to its original level.
- 3.5 The CAB will be required to sign a licence agreement. It is recognised that the service which the CAB deliver is based on external funding and are therefore unable to commit to a long term commitment regarding the number of desks they require. The number of desks they require could either increase or decrease but unfortunately there is no way of knowing their longer term requirements. Their desk requirements will be reviewed on an annual basis and a break clause is contained within their licence agreement at 12 monthly intervals.
- 3.6 Should the number of desks which the CAB require decrease, then the amount of concession the CAB receive will reduce in line with the reduction. However should the CAB secure additional funding and require more desks a decision will have to be taken as to whether the additional charge is covered in their business plan to deliver the additional services or whether the Council increases the concession given to the CAB.
- 3.7 It is likely that that there are some costs associating with moving and the setting up of ICT and telephony for the CAB at the new offices. These costs are still to be determined.

4.0 Implications for Keepers Cottage

- 4.1 As the TIC are relocating to the Visitor Information Hub and the CAB are co-locating to the new council offices (dependant on funding arrangements), Keepers Cottage will be vacant.
- 4.2 In due course a report will be taken to taken to Policy & Finance Committee regarding the longer term options for Keepers Cottage. Keepers Cottage was valued during summer 2015 which indicated it could raise circa £120,000 if it is sold.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required for this report. One will be carried out for customer access in the new offices which will incorporate partnership working

6.0 Comments of Director - Resources

- 6.1 The impact of an increased rent concession allowed to the CAB will be partly offset in 2017/18 by the final reduction of £10,000 in the annual grant payable. The desk charges are based on the costs of operating the new offices; therefore any savings in utility costs at Keepers Cottage will further reduce the impact on the overall budget.
- 6.2 In the event that the CAB decides to reduce the number of desks required then the amount of any additional concession granted should be reduced accordingly.
- 6.3 In the longer term Keepers Cottage may either bring in a capital receipts or annual revenue income, providing financial benefit for the District Council.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (b) the Committee approve the increase of the concession the Council give to the CAB to enable them to co-locate to the new offices. Based on the current requirements of 7 desks and the 2014/15 service charge figure this is in the region of £24,200; and**
- (c) the amount of additional grant will reduce by £4,350 per desk should less than 7 desks be required.**

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council provides a seamless and holistic service for its residents with key service providers located in one place. Additionally the CAB vacating Keepers Cottage will release an asset to provide either additional rental income or a capital receipt should the property be sold.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Jill Baker, Business Manager – Customer Services & External Communications on extension 5810.

Matthew Finch
Director - Customers

HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME REVIEW 2015/16

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the review of the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme; present the proposals for change coming out of the review (phase one); a revised draft Scheme; and an updated project plan for consultation and implementation (phase two), for approval.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As part of its work programme, this Committee has been overseeing a review of the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme 'Scheme'. At its meeting on 7 September 2015, the Committee approved a project initiation document which included a set of objectives for the revised Scheme and gave a broad, indicative timetable for progressing the review, with the intention to implement a revised Scheme in autumn 2016.

3.0 Phase One - Review

- 3.1 The review phase of the project is on target against the plan, with the exception of stakeholder consultation. Following advice from legal on statutory consultation periods and to enable further engagement with Members prior to consulting formally on the changes, the Project Board agreed an amendment to the timetable for statutory consultation to be carried out during the period April-June 16 (running concurrently with the next phase of the project).
- 3.2 Officers on the Project Team have been appraising options for change and undertaking relevant modelling, to ensure the Council's revised Scheme continues to be fit for purpose and meet agreed objectives. The views of Members, captured at a previous Member Workshop event (feedback was presented to the Committee at its meeting on 23 March 2015) have been incorporated into the review and proposals for change.

4.0 Proposals for change

- 4.1 The key proposals for change coming out of the review are set out in the attached table at **Appendix A**, which will be presented to the Committee from officers on the Project Team.
- 4.2 The proposals have also been incorporated into a revised draft Scheme, which is attached at **Appendix B**. It should be noted that the final format of the document may look different, in order to align with Council/Company aspirations to develop on-line services to customers.

5.0 Phase Two – Consultation and Implementation

- 5.1 Implementation and management of the new Scheme is delegated to the Council's wholly owned management company, Newark and Sherwood Homes (NSH). Attached at **Appendix C** is a proposed implementation plan from NSH, which provides indicative timescales for progressing phase two of the review and the resources required, to implement the new Scheme.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 An Equalities Checklist and a draft Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (provided at **Appendix D**) in order to take into account the specific needs of persons with protected characteristics to ensure the Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 will be fully considered and met.

7.0 Impact on Budget

7.1 The costs of implementing the new Scheme are between £32,500 and £48,500, depending on the options/timescale for implementing the revised procedures. It is considered that the costs should be shared equally between the Council's Housing Revenue Account and General Fund and that in the case of the element charged to the General Fund, savings should first be sought elsewhere in the Housing Options budget or a contribution be made from the Homelessness Reserve.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members comment on the proposals for change and draft scheme, in order for statutory consultation to take place, approve the project plan for phase two and the associated resources required.

Background Papers

Issue 3a Allocation Scheme

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding on extension 5545.

Karen White
Director – Safety

Proposals for Change – Council Housing Allocations Policy

March 2016

<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Driver</u>	<u>Link to New Allocation Scheme Objective</u>	<u>Data</u>	<u>Scoping Findings</u>
<u>ELIGIBLE PERSONS</u>				
<u>Local Connection Criteria:</u>				
<p>To join the Housing Register, an Applicant must usually have been resident in the District of Newark and Sherwood for the following time periods or qualifying criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 consecutive years or; 2. 3 out of the last 5 years or; 3. 5 or more consecutive years in which family members have been resident within the District (family members include parents, those with parental responsibility or guardianship, grandparents and siblings); 4. employment for an average of 16 hours per week for the last 6 months or more or; 5. Applicants who are statutory homeless or; 6. Special conditions might include, but is not limited to, the need for specialist medical or support services which are available only in NSDC or; Right to Move Regulations 	<p>Localism Act providing flexibilities, Member steer, managing supply and demand and to respond to neighbouring authorities implementing stronger LC criteria.</p>	<p>1, 3, 5</p>	<p>98% awarded to those with LC to district, 80% with LC to parish – based on self-assessment.</p>	<p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>

<p>7. Former and serving members of the armed forces*.</p> <p><i>Priority at Member Workshop in Nov 2014</i></p>				
<p>Affordability:</p> <p>An Applicant would not normally be made an offer of accommodation, if they own or have interest in another property in the UK or abroad that is reasonable to occupy.</p> <p>Generally an Applicant in these circumstances, will only be considered for supported housing, extra care, re-designated and adapted properties set against their housing needs.</p> <p>All Applicants will be required to complete a financial assessment and will be required to self-certify their financial position, with relevant supporting evidence to confirm their ability to sustain a tenancy in line with NSDC's Tenancy Agreement.</p> <p><i>Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014 (subject to thresholds)</i></p>	<p>Managing supply and demand whilst ensuring availability for those in housing need (caveats for medical incorporated in exclusions to safeguard those requiring specific accommodation not within reach)</p>	<p>2, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>Unavailable</p>	<p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>

REASONABLE PREFERENCE				
Homeless Part VII: Direct Offers				
For statutory homeless households to be awarded a separate category within Band One and suitable direct offers to be made in order to discharge duty. Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014	Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation and bring in line with Housing Act Part VII - historically been flexible which is not deemed sustainable considering increased demand on homelessness and supply and demand for housing. Also had a previous homeless challenge on this point of law.	1, 3, 4, 5	17.1.2 (Homelessness) - Number of applicants housed during 2014/15 - 74 applicants, 2015 to date - 25 applicants. Number of applicants currently on register - 37.	Resource to model not equitable to outcome and impact on allocation scheme is deemed minimal.
Medical / Welfare:				
Prioritise medical circumstances across Bands One, Two and Three (currently in Band One and Three only and include social isolation)	Address the gap between thresholds for Band 1 & 3 and ensuring best use of stock for medical needs identified.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	17.1.3 (Medical) - 945 applicants (121 band 1 & 824 band 3)	Unable to model as assessment criteria not currently defined (phase two) Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.
ExForces				
The Armed Forces England Regulations 2012, provide that Additional Preference must be given to an applicant with urgent housing needs who falls within one of the Reasonable Preference categories. Proposal - an Applicant, who has been assessed as having Reasonable Preference, awarded a Band 2 and who meets the additional preference criteria will be have their banding increased by a maximum of one band. Those already awarded	Member steer, Armed Forces England Regulations 2012, provide that Additional Preference must be given to an applicant with urgent housing needs and who fall within one of the Reasonable Preference categories.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Unavailable	Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.

<p>Band 1 will be given an additional six months waiting time.</p> <p>Consideration has also been given to the (signed 2013) Community Covenant between NSDC and the Armed Forces Community in Newark and Sherwood.</p>				
Right to Move Regulations:				
<p>The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria For Right To Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (the 2015 Regulations) provide that local authorities must not disqualify certain Applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the authority's district where the Applicant is a 'Relevant Person' being a person who:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has Reasonable Preference under s.166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the local authority's district to avoid hardship, and 2. need to move because the tenant works in the district, or 3. need to move to take up an offer of work. <p>Proposal – to opt for the minimum quota as allowed from guidance due to the high number of applicants on the Housing Register with identified housing need and low number of</p>	<p>Statutory reasonable preference category not currently included in scheme. (Quota to be implemented)</p>	<p>1, 3, 5</p>	<p>Unavailable</p>	<p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>

allocations that become available each year. The quota is therefore set at 1% of housing allocations forecasted for the coming year, based on the actual number of allocations in the previous year.				
ADDITIONAL PREFERENCE				
Move on from Supported Housing Projects be categorised as Band Two (instead of Band One)	To help create sustainable communities and prevent domination of allocations to this group in certain local areas.	3, 5	22 applicants	<p>Whilst the modelling shows there will be a 50% decrease in successful allocations for R2M applicants this will be balanced against removal of cumulative need from Band 2</p> <p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>
Move adaptations to effective and efficient from Band One	To improve management / facilitate move on due to a lack of supply of such properties	3, 5	2 applicants	Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.
<p>Changing Places to be expanded to two beds and to demote applicants if they are not actively bidding within a 12 month period.</p> <p><i>Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014</i></p>	To improve management / facilitate move on due to a lack of supply and prevent underoccupancy and knock on impact to HRA BP	2, 3, 5	101 applicants	<p>Modelling shows there would be a slight increased demand on 1 bedroom accommodation; however this would be counter balanced by the fact that these tenants would be releasing 2 bedroom housing which is also in high demand.</p> <p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>

Remove cumulative preference/multiple needs <i>Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014</i>	No longer a requirement under Localism Act and to manage housing need and demand.	3, 5	151 applicants	Unavailable
Remove children in first floor	Limited stock availability for certain household types and avoiding like for like moves	3, 5	63 applicants	Unavailable
Remove applicants of tied houses or service tenancies not required to leave (17.4.3)	Reducing number of applicants on the register with no prospect of being housed - in band 4	3, 5	Unavailable	Unavailable
<u>OTHER PROPOSALS</u>				
To amend qualification for an additional bedroom for an unborn child from 26 weeks pregnancy to 36 weeks <i>Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014</i>	To prevent accumulation of arrears and trigger of enforcement (£250/4 weeks arrears) which DHP will not cover, protecting HRA BP and limited stock/supply	3, 5	4 current applicants affected	Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.
Penalising Refusals - Applicants who refuse two offers of accommodation will have their application suspended for six months and will be unable to bid for properties advertised during this period. If a further refusal of an offer of accommodation is made, following reinstatement on the Housing Register, a twelve month suspension will be applied. <i>Consensus at Member Workshop in Nov 2014</i>	To prevent high number of refusals and associated administrative resource and to encourage behaviour change, again managing limited stock supply.	3, 5	81 refusals on 51 properties out of 197 properties (April-Sept 2015)	Modelling suggests 25% of properties are refused but it is envisaged that applicants will consider thoroughly what they are bidding on. Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.

<p>To allow foster carers/those adopting requiring additional bedrooms to be allocated suitable size properties, assessed on an individual basis in liaison and as confirmed in writing by social care (s14 suitability of property types)</p>	<p>Statutory guidance makes clear that it is expected that social homes go to people who generally need them, such as hard working families and those looking to adopt or foster a child in need of a stable family.</p>	<p>1, 4, 5</p>	<p>Unavailable</p>	<p>Will need to be tested upon implementation to evidence achievement of objectives.</p>
<p>Amendment to ‘exceptions’ -</p> <p>An exception may be made in making an offer of accommodation in the following (but is not limited to) circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no valid court order; or 2. A debt relief order is in place and in payment; or 3. At least 75% of their total housing debts has been paid off; or 4. Evidenced support needs. <p>All exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Behaviour change – encourage re-payment of housing debts</p>	<p>3,5</p>		
<p>Inclusion of RealHome – advertisement of Private Rented properties</p>	<p>Facilitator of wider housing products</p>	<p>5</p> <p>And broad project objectives</p>		

OBJECTIVES

To Support the Council's Strategic Priorities: (subject to review)

1. Prosperity
2. People
3. Place
4. Public Service

Broad Project Objectives:

1. To ensure a sustainable viable HRA BP
2. To prepare the Council in becoming a facilitator for a range of housing products to satisfy housing need and aspirations (maximizing income generation opportunities for the Council, through delivery of the Housing Growth Agenda).
3. To maintain and develop sustainable homes and healthy communities.

New Allocation Scheme Objectives:

1. To meet statutory duties to local households in housing need
2. To support applicants to meet their housing aspirations, across housing tenures
3. To manage demand and encourage applicants to self-manage their housing choices and make informed decisions
4. To ensure the Councils equal opportunities obligations are met.
5. To make best use of the supply of affordable housing stock in the District, contributing towards a vibrant housing market.

Supporting the Housing Vision for N&S (as per Management Agreement):

To maintain the Council's housing stock to a decent standard, ensuring it is fit for purpose to meet the needs of current and future tenants, delivering excellent housing services that offer good value for money, inclusive involvement and achieve tenant's satisfaction, set against sustaining a viable HRA BP that can deliver associated strategic priorities and objectives of the Council.

DRAFT HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) operates an Allocations Scheme ('Scheme') which is implemented and managed by its wholly owned management company, Newark and Sherwood Homes (NSH).

Council housing, properties owned by NSH and some Registered Provider (RP) properties (where the NSDC has 'Nomination Rights') are let to people in accordance with this Scheme. NSDC has Nomination Rights to most RP properties in the district. This means NSDC nominates applicants on the Housing Register who are successful in 'bidding'. However, RP Allocation Schemes may differ and each will make the final decision as to who properties are offered to. Some RP's keep their own Housing Register and Applicants can apply to join these individually.

Applicants who are not currently NSDC tenants are defined as 'Housing Applicants'. This will include applicants who are current tenants with a RP.

All NSDC tenants who have held their current tenancy for at least one year may apply for a transfer. These are defined as 'Transfer Applicants'. This time period may be relaxed where a move is required to either meet an evidenced medical or social need of a member of a household, address under occupancy or in the interests of effective and efficient use of stock.

Transfer Applicants will be required to give up their existing property as a condition of granting them a tenancy of another property, although their status as a tenant will be unaltered and their rights under the Right to Buy will remain uninterrupted.

Legislative Framework

It is a requirement under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011 that all Local Housing Authorities must have and publish an Allocation Scheme and ensure that properties are allocated according to that Scheme. This Allocation Scheme has taken into account all of the legal requirements outlined in Part VI and other relevant Acts and statutory guidance.

Reasonable Preference

The legislation requires that an Allocation Scheme must be framed to give Reasonable Preference to certain categories of people as follows:

1. people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act);
2. people who are owed a duty by any Local Authority under section 190(2) 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
3. people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;

4. people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability;
5. people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Local Authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).
6. Applicants from these Reasonable Preference categories are placed within Bands One to Three of the Housing Register (discussed in **more detail in Section 11**) in order to give them Reasonable Preference over other applicants.

Please note, that those applicants who would fall within a Reasonable Preference category, will not qualify if they are subject to any of the **exemptions in Section below**.

Armed Forces

The Armed Forces England Regulations 2012, provide that Additional Preference must be given to an applicant with urgent housing needs who falls within one of the Reasonable Preference categories **referred to above** if:-

1. S/he is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributed (wholly or partly) to his/her service; or
2. S/he has formerly served in the regular forces; or
3. S/he has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of his spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
4. S/he is serving or has served in the reserved forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service

Forces are defined as “regular forces” are the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, The Army and the Royal Air Force. “Reserved forces” are the Royal Fleet Reserve, The Royal Naval Reserve, The Royal Marines Reserve. “The Army Reserve” are the Territorial Army, The Royal Air Force Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

NSDC define former and serving members of the armed forces as:

1. People who left the regular Armed Forces within the last 5 years, except those dishonourably discharged
2. Serving members of either the regular or reserve Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
3. Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner

Additional Preference for Armed Forces

An applicant who has been assessed as having Reasonable Preference, awarded a Band 2 and who meets the additional preference criteria will be have their banding increased by a maximum of one band. Those already awarded Band 1 will be given an additional six months waiting time.

Consideration has also been given to the (signed 2013) Community Covenant between NSDC and the Armed Forces Community in Newark and Sherwood.

Right to Move Regulations

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria For Right To Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (the 2015 Regulations) provide that local authorities must not disqualify certain Applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the authority's district where the Applicant is a 'Relevant Person' being a person who:-

1. Has Reasonable Preference under s.166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the local authority's district to avoid hardship, **and**
2. Need to move because the tenant works in the district, **or**
3. Need to move to take up an offer of work.

A Relevant Person has a need to move for the purpose of the 2015 Regulations if the Applicant:-

1. Works in the district of the local housing authority, **or**
2. Has been offered work in the district of the local Housing Authority **and**
3. The authority is satisfied that the relevant person has a genuine intention of taking up the offer of work.

The 2015 Regulations does not apply if work is short term or marginal, ancillary to work in another district or voluntary.

NSDC has opted for the minimum quota as allowed from guidance due to the high number of applicants on the Housing Register with identified housing need and low number of allocations that become available each year. The quota is therefore set at 1% of housing allocations forecasted for the coming year, based on the actual number of allocations in the previous year.

This will be reviewed annually and altered if required.

Equal Opportunities

NSDC and its partners are committed to promoting equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practises in the services it provides. It is committed to giving all applicants an equal opportunity to obtain housing, whatever their age, disability, gender, race and nationality, religion or belief, transgender identity or sexual orientation.

Data Protection

Applicant's details will only be disclosed to a third party with either the Applicant's consent, or lawfully (where one of the exemptions under Data Protection legislation applies) with other relevant agencies including but not limited to the Police, Health Service, Social Services and RPs.

By returning an application to us, applicants are giving their consent for NSDC and NSH to process and hold sensitive data which will be used in the assessment of the application and may be used for the delivery of other services provided.

2. REGISTRATION

Applications for housing are administered and processed by NSH on behalf of NSDC. More information is available from <http://www.nshomes.co.uk/applying-for-a-home> or by telephoning NSH Customer Access Service on 0845 2585550.

Every Applicant must complete an application form together with all relevant and supporting information required and submit this to NSH for registration.

Properties that become available to let will usually be offered to applicants on the Housing Register. Application forms can be downloaded from the website www.nshomes.co.uk or by visiting your local office.

Applicants can request advice and assistance in completing their application form from NSH, this may include translation where required.

Once registered Applicants are placed on the Housing Register and provided with a bidding number.

Who Can Apply

Anyone aged 16 years or over can apply to go on the Housing Register if they have a local connection and are not subject to **immigration control as set out below.**

An Applicant cannot usually be offered a tenancy until they are 18 years old. However in certain circumstances a tenancy could be offered and held in trust until the applicant reaches the age of 18. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and subject to NSDC/NSH senior officer approval.

Local Connection

To join the Housing Register, an Applicant must usually have been resident in the District of Newark and Sherwood for the following time periods or qualifying criteria:

1. 2 consecutive years **or**;
2. 3 out of the last 5 years **or**;
3. 5 or more consecutive years in which family members have been resident within the District (family members include parents, those with parental responsibility or guardianship, grandparents and siblings);
4. Employment for an average of 16 hours per week for the last 6 months or more **or**;
5. Applicants who are statutory homeless **or**;
6. Special conditions might include, but is not limited to, the need for specialist medical or support services which are available only in NSDC **or**; **Right to Move Regulations**
7. Former and serving members of the armed forces*.

*Section 315 of the 2008 Act amends s.199 of the 1996 Act so that a person serving in the Armed Forces can establish a local connection with a district through residence or employment there, in the same way as a civilian person.

In exceptional circumstances and to ensure effective use of stock, allocations may be advertised and made available to households who do not have a local connection.

Asylum and Immigration status

An Applicant will not be eligible to join the Housing Register if they are subject to immigration controls under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, unless they;

1. Already hold a Secure tenancy
2. Already hold an Assured tenancy
3. Are in a class as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, which currently include:
 - i. Having Refugee status
 - ii. Having exceptional leave to remain in the UK
 - iii. Having indefinite leave to remain in the UK
 - iv. Persons subject to immigration control who are a National of a country that has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance (ECSMA) of the European Social Charter.

Any application identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (which may be amended from time to time) and in accordance with Regulations made by the Secretary of State, will be assessed in accordance with the Act and subsequent guidance.

Applicants who are not eligible at the point of application will not be placed on the Housing Register and will be notified of this in writing stating the reasons their application is not considered eligible and how to re-apply if their circumstances change.

Advocate

If an Applicant feels they cannot manage their own affairs and are unable to bid for properties themselves, they can choose someone to act for them. This person will be called an 'Advocate'. Applicants need to complete and sign the relevant questions on registration and ensure their advocate signs the declaration to act on their behalf.

The Applicant or their advocate is responsible for keeping their application up to date with their current circumstances by advising of any changes that could affect their application.

Information Declarations

If Applicants give false or misleading information or withhold information, which is reasonably required for the Applicants to give, they will be removed from the Housing Register and may be liable to prosecution. If they have been offered a tenancy as a result of this misinformation or the withholding of relevant information, the tenancy will be terminated. If Applicants have deliberately altered their circumstances to increase their banding, the right is reserved to move them into the correct band and may result in suspension of their application entirely.

If you are an employee or a Councillor of NSDC, an employee or Board Member of NSH your application must include a statement of this fact. In addition, a senior officer of NSDC or NSH must approve any offer of a property made to persons in these circumstances.

3. EXCLUSIONS

Some Applicants, although registered may not be eligible for the allocation of a property.

NSDC/NSH reserve the right not to make an offer of accommodation to individual applicants where satisfied that:

1. The applicant, or a member of their household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which if the applicant was a secure tenant of the Council would entitle the Council to a possession order (Ground 2 of Schedule 2, Housing Act 1985).
2. The unacceptable behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.
3. The applicant or a member of their household is deemed unsuitable at the time of allocation.

Examples of unsuitability includes, but is not limited to:

1. Behaviour linked to financial gain such as benefit fraud or any other criminal offence of a similar nature.
2. Non-payment of rent, rechargeable repairs, other housing debt such as garage rent arrears, former rent arrears including NSDC/NSH and other social housing providers, anti-social behaviour, or any behaviour type which would be considered a breach of terms and conditions of NSDC's Tenancy Agreement (including any future variation)
3. Existing tenants wishing to transfer who have breached the terms and conditions set out in their Tenancy Agreement.
4. Behaviour which has resulted in any criminal or civil sanction against that which affects their suitability to be a tenant (including but is not limited to, injunction, possession order, criminal conviction, money judgment or enforcement of the same).
5. If an applicant intentionally gives or has intentionally given in the past, false information on any part of a housing application form or form to claim benefits of any type

The exclusions in this section include past or present behaviour of the individual or any member of the applicant's household.

In some circumstances a limit may also be placed on the type of property and/or area an applicant can apply for in order to manage any wider risks posed.

Exceptions

An exception may be made in making an offer of accommodation in the following (but is not limited to) circumstances:

1. There is no valid court order; or
2. A debt relief order is in place and in payment; or
3. At least 75% of their total housing debts has been paid off; or
4. Evidenced support needs.

All exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis.

If the Applicant does not meet the above criteria but feel that they have special or unusual circumstances that should be taken into account, the applicant should apply in writing to NSH explaining what these special circumstances are.

Statutory Homeless Applicants

If any of the exclusions contained within this Scheme are applicable to an applicant who is deemed to be statutory homeless by NSDC, a case review will be convened and a final decision regarding an offer of accommodation would require NSDC/NSH senior officer approval.

Financial Resources and Affordability

An Applicant would not normally be made an offer of accommodation, if they own or have interest in another property in the UK or abroad that is reasonable to occupy. Generally an Applicant in these circumstances, will only be considered for supported housing, extra care, re-designated and adapted properties set against their housing needs.

All Applicants will be required to complete a financial assessment and will be required to self-certify their financial position, with relevant supporting evidence to confirm their ability to sustain a tenancy in line with NSDC's Tenancy Agreement.

If an applicant fails to provide this information or intentionally gives false information in this respect, they will be excluded from being made an offer of accommodation.

4. REVIEW OF DECISION TO EXCLUDE FROM THE ALLOCATION SCHEME

Applicants can request a review in writing of any decision to exclude them from the Allocation Scheme, or any restrictions placed upon them. A senior officer, of NSH, not previously involved in the case will consider this review.

The Applicant or their Advocate is responsible for keeping their application up to date with their current circumstances. They must advise of any changes that could affect their application and complete a change of circumstances form where appropriate.

Failure to do so may result in an offer of a property not being made.

An annual review will be carried out of applications on the Housing Register at the anniversary of each application. If there is no response to this review the application will usually be cancelled.

Non Bidders

Applicants not bidding for accommodation will be reviewed regularly and those in priority Bands One and Two will be contacted to establish why they are not bidding and to ascertain if any support is required to facilitate future bidding.

In certain circumstances where applicants are not bidding for accommodation, without justification, their application may be removed from the Housing Register.

5. ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED

Applicants are prioritised according to their housing need and are placed in the relevant 'banding'. This will allow applicants in greatest need to be given priority.

Transfer Applicants will be banded under the same assessment process as housing applicants.

NSH will notify the applicant of their registration date, registration number and priority band awarded. Information will also be provided as to the suitability and size of property applicants are eligible to bid for.

If an applicant's circumstances require a change in banding after registration, a band date will be applied as part of the allocation **procedure (please see below)**. This will be the date an Applicant qualifies for that band and not their original registration date.

6. APPLICANT BANDINGS

BAND ONE

HOMELESSNESS

Homeless households are defined as those who, NSDC has a statutory duty to secure accommodation (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), are in priority need and who are not homeless intentionally.

Applications from these households will be awarded Band One and only one direct offer of suitable accommodation will be made in order to discharge NSDC's main housing duty. These Applicants will not be offered the opportunity to bid for accommodation, instead this will be managed in liaison with their assigned case officer at NSDC who will place bids on the Applicants behalf.

If this offer of accommodation is refused, and the property is considered reasonable and is suitable for the household's needs, then no further offers of accommodation will be made. NSDC will have discharged its duty under the Provision of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996; however, the homeless applicant has a right to request a review of this decision under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 by writing to NSDC within 21 days of the date of refusal, stating the reasons they do not agree with the decision.

MEDICAL GROUNDS

High Priority – A medical condition or disability where current accommodation seriously undermines and affects the Applicant or a member of their household's health and the accommodation is therefore considered unsuitable. Supporting evidence will be required.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Identified Category 1 hazards where the enforcement of Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) is in place and subject to Environmental Health action. This priority is only awarded for the period of time that the work remains outstanding.

STATUTORY OVERCROWDING

Applicants living in statutory overcrowded housing.

The permitted number of people for a property is worked out from the number and sizes of the rooms in the property, as detailed in the Housing Act 2004, shown in the two tables below:

Number of Rooms	Permitted Number
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7.5
5	10
6 +	A further 2 persons for every room

Floor Area of Room	Number of Persons
Over 110 sq ft	2
90 to 110 sq ft	1.5
70 to 90 sq ft	1
50 to 70 sq ft	0.5

Both tables are used and the lowest number reached is the permitted number for the property.

All living rooms and sleeping rooms are included in the calculation when the permitted number of persons is worked out. Kitchens, bathrooms and toilets are not included in the calculation.

When working out the number of persons sleeping in the property, occupants are counted as follows:

- Over ten years old - 1 person
- One to nine years - 0.5 person
- Under one year - not counted

A senior officer at NSH will assess and award the correct Banding according to the above assessment tables.

UNDER OCCUPATION – CHANGING PLACES SCHEME (applicable to NSDC tenants only)

The Changing Places Scheme is designed to give priority to Transfer Applicants who occupy a property of two or more bedrooms and want to move to smaller accommodation. Applicants awarded this Band who have not actively bid for accommodation within a twelve month period, will be demoted to the Band that represents their housing needs.

If evidence, such as the District Wide Housing Needs Survey carried out by NSDC, no longer supports the necessity for the Changing Places Scheme to have a priority status, relevant amendments or a revoking the scheme will be considered as part as the wider Scheme review process, as set out **in Section 19.**

BAND TWO

HOMELESSNESS THREATENED WITH/NO STATUTORY DUTY

Applicants threatened with homelessness as assessed by NSDC and/or homeless households to whom NSDC has no statutory duty to secure accommodation (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).

APPLICANTS REQUIRING MOVE ON ACCOMMODATION FROM DESIGNATED SUPPORTED HOUSING PROJECTS

This Band is only applicable when the Applicant's support needs have been identified and provision for meeting these needs is in place.

MEDICAL GROUNDS

Medium Priority – A medical condition or disability where current accommodation undermines or moderately affects the Applicant or a member of their household's health and is considered unsuitable and/or where this leads to social isolation. Supporting evidence will be required.

INSECURITY OF TENURE

Applicants who have been served a valid Notice Seeking Possession or court possession proceedings from a landlord or mortgage lender other than NSDC, NSH or RPs. Applicants will be required to provide evidence that the Notice served is not a result of their or a member of the households act(s) or omission(s).

OVERCROWDING

Applicants who are lacking two bedrooms or more in their current home (but are not considered to be statutorily overcrowded).

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Agricultural, horticultural and forestry applications for workers who need their workers to be housed under the Rent (Agricultural) Act 1976. NSH will make a decision to give priority under this band after receiving a full report from the Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee.

BAND THREE

MEDICAL GROUNDS

Low Priority - Where current accommodation creates some difficulties for an Applicant or a member of their household's health but it is considered manageable in their present accommodation.

HOMELESSNESS INTENTIONALLY

Homeless households to whom NSDC has no statutory duty to secure accommodation (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), whether or not they are in priority need, who are intentionally homeless

LIVING CONDITIONS

Identified Category 2 hazards where the enforcement of Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) is in place and subject to Environmental Health action. This priority is only awarded for the period of time that the work remains outstanding.

OVERCROWDING

Applicants who are lacking one bedroom in their current home (but are not considered to be statutorily overcrowded).

SHARING

Applicants/households sharing personal facilities, such as kitchens and bathrooms within their current accommodation, with another household. This would exclude gardens and communal areas.

BAND FOUR

Applicants or Transfer Applicants **with no identified and evidenced housing need.**

Applicants who have deliberately worsened their circumstances to be awarded a priority banding or who have not taken reasonable steps to prevent the worsening of their circumstances.

Applicants should note that if they are awarded Band 4 that this Allocations Scheme is unlikely to secure an offer of social housing and therefore, these applicants are encouraged to consider other housing options and products.

7. ALLOCATION PROCEDURE

For all properties advertised a list will be generated of Applicants who have expressed interest in the property. Applicants who have stated their interest in the property and meet the criteria for that property will be matched by the following procedure:

1. Priority Band; then
2. Local Connection, then

3. Banding Date.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to provide information required to carry out the necessary verification checks and references.

Verification checks and financial assessments will be undertaken for the Applicants shortlisted. The applicant will be asked to confirm that the information given on the application form regarding their circumstances has not changed since the application. In some circumstances, the successful applicant may be contacted to assess that they are in an appropriate position to sustain a tenancy in line with NSDC's Tenancy Agreement.

If the Applicant's verification checks are satisfactory, the offer of the tenancy of the property will be made.

In the event of the applicant's verification checks being unsatisfactory they will be advised of the reason for this decision in writing and the property will be offered to the next qualifying applicant.

Withdrawing an Offer

NSH reserve the right to withdraw any offer of accommodation. An explanation will be given to the applicant in writing.

Penalties for Refusing Offers of Accommodation

Applicants who refuse two offers of accommodation will have their application suspended for six months and will be unable to bid for properties advertised during this period.

If a further refusal of an offer of accommodation is made, following reinstatement on the Housing Register, a twelve month suspension will be applied.

If an applicant's circumstances significantly change during a suspension then the review process at **Section 18** should be followed.

8. ADVERTISING PROPERTIES

Properties available for allocation will be advertised by NSH. Properties advertised will give a description of the property, its location and suitability criteria to help applicants make relevant and informed choices.

Properties will be advertised on the NHS website and on posters in the local offices and at various partner agency premises.

These adverts will include social housing properties and may also include private rented properties available through NSDC's Realhome Scheme. Realhome is a tenant finding service for Private Sector Landlords.

More information on the Realhome Scheme is available on the NSDC website <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/realhome/>.

In some circumstances, properties may not be advertised as part of the Allocations Scheme. Examples of this can include but are not limited to:

1. Temporary accommodation required because of a flood, fire or other emergency.
2. Properties required for existing tenants when they are faced with home loss
3. Effective and efficient use of the housing stock and duties of NSDC/NSH.

Properties advertised will be available for both Applicants and Transfer Applicants. Applicants or their advocate can request details of available properties by contacting NSH Customer Access Service on 0845 2585550.

Applicants or their Advocate will be able to state their interest in a maximum of two properties per weekly advert cycle and unlimited RP or Realhome properties, giving their order of preference. Interest in a property can be made via telephone, email, online, text or in person. Applicants will not be contacted if their bid is unsuccessful.

Available properties will usually be advertised a maximum of twice. If the property remains vacant NSH will consider alternative ways of letting the available property. This could include allowing Applicants to bid on more than two NSDC properties per cycle and relaxing criteria.

9. SUITABILITY OF PROPERTY TYPES

Applicants should have regard to the criteria stipulated in the advertisement of available properties prior to placing a bid to ensure they meet the required criteria.

Before an offer of accommodation is made, NSH will take into account the suitability and size of the property in relation to the family/number of people seeking accommodation.

Suitability criteria may be adapted from time to time to reflect the supply and demand of properties, management of stock and overall community housing needs.

The following will usually be applied:

1. Single applicants are considered to need bedsits/one bedroom.
2. An adult requesting to share with another adult (who is not a partner) will require one bedroom each.
3. Married couples, same sex partners and persons' living as man and wife are considered to need one bedroom (unless the partner needs a separate bedroom on proven medical grounds).
4. Two dependent children of the same sex and two children under ten of the opposite sex will normally be expected to share a bedroom. Dependent children are defined as children less than 21 years who live with the applicant and where the applicant is the parent or guardian and in receipt of Child Benefit or the child is in higher education.
5. Households who have contact with their children but with whom the children do not reside on a permanent basis must be able to show that they do have established contact. Households who have contact with their children cannot normally be considered for properties larger than two bedrooms irrespective of the number of children they have contact with.
6. Foster carers or those adopting children who require additional bedrooms will be assessed on an individual basis in liaison and as confirmed in writing by relevant social care departments.

7. A woman with a pregnancy confirmed by an appropriate medical practitioner, will be counted as a household with a child after 36 weeks of pregnancy and therefore qualify for a bedroom each. If she already has one child, the unborn baby will be treated as if it were the same sex.

Applicants are suitable for accommodation designated as supported accommodation if:

1. The Applicant or partner are 60 years of age or over
2. The Applicant or a member of the household is aged 60 years over. (Such applicants may be considered for some, but not all, older person's accommodation).
3. The Applicant or a member of the household is under 60 years but has a proven mobility, medical or disability need. (Such applicants may be considered for some, but not all, older person's accommodation).

In some circumstances medical authorities and/or evidence may be requested in addition to and in support of a completed medical self-assessment questionnaire.

10. **EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF TENANCIES AND HOUSING STOCK**

This section of the Allocation Scheme enables priority transfers for existing tenants who find themselves in exceptional circumstances, which means remaining in their current accommodation is no longer deemed appropriate or safe and/or to enable NSDC and NSH to make best use of its limited available housing stock, prevent homelessness and create sustainable communities.

In such cases, a review of individual circumstances will be carried out between a senior officer of both NSDC and NSH to make a final decision based on the evidence available.

The outcome of this decision may result in a direct allocation of accommodation, for reasons such as (but is not limited to):

1. Severe harassment, threats or actual violence, victims of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse or where there is personal risk to the household if they remain. Sufficient evidence is required
2. Applicants who have either lost their statutory right to succession or have a succession right to a tenancy and the current accommodation is not suitable, as set out in the Tenancy Agreement.
3. To enable major repairs which require a permanent or temporary move (decant)
4. Where adapted properties are no longer required by a tenant or a member of their household.

This decision may be part of a multi-agency risk assessment where information (including sensitive information) will be lawfully shared.

Local Lettings Schemes

Local Lettings Schemes can also assist in the management of existing housing stock, to help resolve issues such as, areas suffering from a disproportionate amount of anti-social behaviour or to help widen housing choices for local people and provide sustainable communities.

Local Lettings Schemes are an exception. They implement additional specific criteria to be considered in a local area when allocating housing through this Allocation Scheme.

The application of Local Lettings Schemes will be carefully considered by NSDC and NSH based on need and evidence for a limited period of time and reviewed to assess its effectiveness.

Local Lettings Schemes will be published on NSH website, available at www.nshomes.co.uk

11. ANNOUNCEMENT OF LETTINGS/FEEDBACK

Results of every property allocated will be published on a monthly basis on NSH website, available at www.nshomes.co.uk

Feedback information is available to applicants, to understand their housing options, to make informed decisions and choices about their future bidding and to compare their housing need against the available housing.

NSH will continue to produce and publicise facts on the overall allocation of properties within the district on a monthly basis.

12. CUSTOMER COMMENTS PROCEDURE

Applicants who wish to comment or complain about the service are able to contact NSH via housing@nshomes.co.uk or visiting the website at www.nshomes.co.uk in order to obtain the relevant forms for completion to ensure this is dealt with under official procedures.

NSH is committed to delivering excellent housing services to support NSDC deliver its housing vision and priorities.

13. REVIEWS AND APPEALS

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any decision made by NSH, they may request a review of this decision. This will allow an applicant to have their circumstances initially considered and reviewed by a senior officer from NSH, not previously involved in any assessment or decision.

If the applicant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, and feels there are additional special circumstances that should be (or have not been) taken into account, they would then be able to appeal to NSDC and this appeal would be undertaken by a senior officer.

This process will ensure that an applicant's appeal is dealt with fairly, according to the Scheme, relevant legislation and within a time limited framework.

Requests should be made in writing, supported by evidence.

Review requests relating to the offer of accommodation to statutory homeless households in Band 1, is excluded from this review process. Further details can be found in [Section ??](#).

14. SCHEME REVIEW

Senior officers from NSDC and NSH will regularly review the Allocations Scheme to ensure its requirements are being implemented and that it continues to meet relevant legislation and any new duties placed upon the Council.

Where amendments are necessary these will be implemented in consultation with applicants and stakeholders when and where appropriate.

DRAFT

APPENDIX C

Revised Allocations Scheme – Outline Consultation and Implementation Plan

Please note that the costs and timescales detailed below are based on the proposed, revised allocations scheme. Should Committee require any changes that deviate from the proposed revised scheme then this may impact upon both the estimated costs and the estimated timescales given below.

Please note the elements outlined below are intended to run concurrently.

Implementation Element	Implementation Options	Estimated Costs	Estimated Timescale
System Changes	Option 1 - Reconfigure system to reflect revised policy and adopt online application process using existing resources	£17,000	43 weeks
	Option 2 - Reconfigure system to reflect revised policy and adopt on line application process using additional resources	£33,000	20 weeks
Housing Applicant review	Send review to all applicants and manual input of returned forms	£11,500	14 Weeks
	Send review to all applicants and require applicants to update their details online	£4,000	8 weeks
Procedure and Process Changes	Redesign operational processes and procedures to reflect changes in allocations policy	Will be achieved within existing resource levels	6 weeks
Consultation with stakeholders	Written (email where possible) consultation with relevant stakeholders	Will be achieved within existing resource levels	12 weeks



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2016

This document should be completed only after the Equalities Checklist has been completed and it has been determined that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Service Area:

Customers

Section/Service Delivery/policy Covered by the Assessment

Housing Choice Team, Newark and Sherwood Homes
Allocation of council owned housing stock
Newark and Sherwood District Council Allocation Scheme

Stage 1 - What is being Assessed?

Newark and Sherwood District Council Allocation Scheme

Stage 2 - Who is Carrying out the Assessment?

Project Team members carrying out the assessment:

Leanne Monger
Lisa Ingram
Maria Cook
Dave Newmarch
Clare Barlow
Julie Davidson

Others involved in the assessment (external challenge):

The Project Board
Local members

Stage 3 - Aims of the Strategy or Service

Briefly describe the aims of the strategy or service:

The Allocation Scheme provides a fair and transparent procedure for the allocation of NSDC properties and the administration of the housing register. NSDC has delegated management responsibility for its housing stock to Newark and Sherwood Homes Ltd – a Council Owned Management Company. Newark and Sherwood Homes manages and implements the Scheme on behalf of the council.

Objectives of the Scheme:

1. To meet statutory duties to local households in housing need
2. To support applicants to meet their housing aspirations, across housing tenures
3. To manage demand and encourage applicants to self-manage their housing choices and make informed decisions
4. To ensure the Councils equal opportunities obligations are met.
5. To make best use of the supply of affordable housing stock in the District, contributing towards a vibrant housing market.

Main Changes: to be added as an appendix – once confirmed.

Stage 4 - Knowing our Customers, Communities and Employees

List the main customers, employees, users or groups receiving, delivering or affected by, this strategy or service:

NSDC & NSH Staff, other housing partners i.e. Registered Providers

Applicants to the Housing Register - we currently have circa 4100 on the list. All but 5% are registered (using current definition) as having a local connection.

Please see Appendix A for a diversity breakdown of the register as at 31 January 2016.

Current tenants of NSDC & NSH – we currently have circa 540 transfer applicants

We work with agencies that support vulnerable client groups with often chaotic lifestyles.

Internal relations:

NSH – Tenancy & Estates Team, Housing Choice Team, Income Recovery Team, Customer Access Service and Executive Company Support Services

NSDC – Housing Options Team, Customer Services, Environmental Health, Revenues and Benefits and Finance

Stage 5 - Background Information

List any information from previous surveys, customer feedback or any relevant performance information that relates to this strategy or service:

Applicants registering for housing remains stable within Newark and Sherwood – currently the list stands at 4104
 This scheme is non-discriminatory in any way; we are confident that the revisions will make it more accessible for all applicants.
 The draft scheme has been presented to elected members who provided feedback from their constituents
 As part of the consultation exercise this document has been shared with multiple agencies and feedback considered

Both NSDC and NSH have robust Policies and Procedures in place to ensure access to all services:

- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018
- Housing Needs Survey

There is no anticipated change to the access to procedures or delivery; it is envisaged that access will be improved due to increased levels of on line, self - serve provision.

Stage 6 - This Stage Looks at Barriers to Accessing Services and any Possible Discrimination that Customers and Communities may Face

Age

Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

Accommodation in short supply across the district is one bedroom units for younger people, many of whom have specific needs. NSH and NSDC have recently commenced a program of new build across the district, the majority of which are one bedroom units of accommodation.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Dedicated accommodation for older people.
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf
- iii. Notts Help Yourself Website

- iv. LMAPS.
- v. R2M Pathway.
- vi. Partnership working with housing providers for Young People.
- vii. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place

Race					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:
Newark and Sherwood’s population is predominantly white British (94%).

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. All minority groups are able to have documents translated and access to support when completing forms, giving due consideration to their cultural differences.
- ii. Use of interpreters as necessary
- iii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf
- iv. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place

Gender					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:
The population with Newark and Sherwood is an even split between male and female according to the Census 2011 data.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. This scheme does not differentiate between gender
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf
- iii. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place

Disability

Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact	Nil Impact	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact	Nil Impact

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

The Census 2011 data shows that within Newark and Sherwood the number and proportion of people receiving key disability benefits as a result of health needs is below the Nottinghamshire average.

There may be a small proportion of applicants who experience a drop in their priority band due to the enhanced needs assessment, but this is to ensure that the limited housing we have available is put to the best use and given to those with the most need.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Comprehensive needs assessment will ensure most appropriate service delivery and accommodation
- ii. Where required support will be made available in the most appropriate format
- iii. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- iv. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Sexual Orientation

Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

There is no accurate data available regarding the profile of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population within Newark and Sherwood. Access to housing from Newark and Sherwood Homes is available and based on eligibility; the sexual orientation of the applicant is not a factor taken into account when assessing eligibility.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Gender reassignment					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

There is no accurate data available regarding the profile of gender reassignment population within Newark and Sherwood

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Where families are effected by Gender reassignment issues we will consider each on an individual basis
- ii. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- iii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Marriage and Civil Partnership					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

Access to housing with Newark and Sherwood Homes is based on eligibility, whether applicants are married, in a civil partnership or living together as a couple is not a factor considered within the eligibility assessment.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Pregnancy and Maternity					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact	Nil Impact

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

The eligibility of a pregnant mother to a bedroom for the unborn child has been extended from 26 weeks pregnancy to 36 weeks pregnancy. This has been introduced to avoid arrears, potential homelessness and eviction.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Religion or Belief					
Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

There is no reason to believe that there will be any impact on any specific religious group in regard to this scheme.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Other Groups or Issues (e.g. socio-economic)

Access to service			Delivery of service		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact ✓	Positive Impact	Negative Impact ✓	Nil Impact

Please describe any positive impact, negative impact, any barriers or potential discrimination:

Applicants who do not have a local connection who are part of these protected characteristic groups may not receive an allocation.

Applicants with financial means who are part of these protected characteristic groups may not receive an allocation unless they require supported or extra care accommodation. Housing supply far outweighs demand so we are looking for those applicants who have the means to secure/purchase their own accommodation to do so.

Please describe any measures you have already got in place to reduce inequality to ensure customers can access this service:

- i. Quarterly performance monitoring is in place
- ii. Applicants can appoint an advocate to act on their behalf

Stage 7 - Action plan and Policy Review

From the previous section list the specific actions required to address any problems you have identified:

Action	Service Plan/Delivery Plan	Officer Responsible	Timescale	Resources	Milestones, Monitoring and Review Details
Age – Maintain good partnership working with agencies. Review R2M pathway		Tanya Venables Clare Barlow Julie Davidson Sharon Stewardson/Chris Billam	Ongoing By 1 April 2017	Officer time Officer time	

<p>Disability – Review enhanced assessment to ensure housing is allocated to those in most need</p>		<p>Julie Davidson Clare Barlow Dave Newmarch</p>	<p>12 months after implementation</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity – Review impact on transfer requests due to overcrowding following the birth of the child</p>		<p>Julie Davidson Clare Barlow Dave Newmarch</p>	<p>12 months after implementation</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	
<p>Other groups or issues – monitor number of applicants with no LC receiving an allocation</p> <p>Ensure financial assessments are carried out correctly and do not result in housing need failing to be addressed or where effective use of stock is adversely affected.</p>		<p>Julie Davidson Clare Barlow</p> <p>Julie Davidson Clare Barlow Chris Billam</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Officer time</p>	
<p>Allocation Scheme and EIA Review</p>		<p>Leanne Monger Lisa Ingram Maria Cook Dave Newmarch Clare Barlow Julie Davidson</p>	<p>6 months after implementation</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	

Stage 8 – Outcome(s) of Equality Impact Assessment:

No major change needed	Adjust the policy/proposal	Adverse impact but continue	Stop and remove the policy and proposal
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Stage 9 – Confirmation and Publish the Results

I confirm that these actions are being adopted as everyday practice and if necessary incorporated into the Service Plan or Delivery Plan.

Signed by Lead officer

[xxxx]

Date:

[xx/xx/xx]



EQUALITIES CHECKLIST ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2016

For every report or policy change, even if you do not think there will be an impact in terms of equalities this checklist needs to be completed.

Guidance

Equality Impact Assessment - Considerations whether an EIA is required

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have 'due regard' for equality in the way it provides its services and makes decisions.

Whilst the specific duties of the Equality Act do not require public bodies to prepare Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) when making every decision involving a change or new development in service or policy, these are often a useful tool in systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies on people in respect of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage or civil partnership, and age. This includes looking for opportunities to promote equality, as well as for negative or adverse impacts that can be removed or reduced.

By asking questions about how a policy, service or decision will affect different groups we can design these so that they promote the good effects and eliminate the bad. By understanding and meeting the needs of different people we can better meet the needs and provide more effective services.

If we can't demonstrate that decisions have shown 'due regard' to equality issues, they can be challenged through judicial review – potentially resulting in decisions having to be re-started with significant extra costs in time, money, and negative publicity.

It should be noted that consideration should be given to completing an Equality Impact Assessment where you are considering a contract solution which will directly affect services to the council's customers.

Situations where it is not necessary to carry out an EIA:

An EIA of a decision *does not* need to be carried out if any of the following apply:

- a. **No change to policies, functions or services:** a decision does not relate to a 'proposed new or changing policy, service or function', does not contain proposals for workforce restructures, and is not a financial decision that will have an impact on services. An example could be a 'For information only' report. If this noted the development of a new or changing policy or service, the expectation is that an EIA would have taken place at an earlier stage, for example for decisions taken at departmental management level.
- b. **Recent relevant EIA already carried out:** the issue has already been subject to or is an action arising from a recent equality impact assessment and that EIA properly considered the issues that are relevant to this decision.

- c. There is clearly no relevance to equality: the issue clearly has no relevance to equality (note - many issues with no apparent relevance may have hidden impacts). **The Equalities Proforma attached at the end of this guidance will assist you to identify this.** Examples of situations where it is not necessary to carry out EIA (although any relevant equality issues should still be considered) are:
- Producing a poster
 - A decision to use double sided rather than single sided printing
 - A portfolio holder report to approve an individual routine payment as part of a wider policy
 - A report which is an update on implementation of a strategy which was originally subject to EIA (although it would be good practice to update the original EIA and check that actions it noted have been carried out)

The Equalities Proforma attached is designed to ensure you think about each protected characteristic and determine whether the actions you are proposing will have an effect on this group(s). If it is determined there is an impact, even if this is of low significance, you then need to complete a full Equalities Impact Assessment (insert link).

You will notice that there is an additional category that has been included in the Proforma which is not a “protected characteristic” defined by the legislation i.e. ‘socio-economic’. Whilst there is no duty on us to undertake a consideration for this group, the Council wishes to understand any impact there may be within our district on this group and therefore asks you to consider this whilst considering those groups with protected characteristics.

Equalities Proforma

Business Unit:	Customers
Section/Service Delivery/Policy Covered by the Assessment:	Housing Choice team, Newark and Sherwood Homes Allocation of Council owned housing stock Newark and Sherwood District Council Allocation Scheme
Brief Description of Service Delivery/Policy Area and Proposed Change:	Newark and Sherwood District Council Allocation Scheme Scheme review
Assessment Carried out by:	Project Team members carrying out the assessment: Leanne Monger, Lisa Ingram, Maria Cook, Dave Newmarch, Clare Barlow and Julie Davidson
Date of Assessment:	

To determine whether an Equalities Impact Assessment is required please read the following statements and tick the one that applies. At the end of this document is a quick check box which will help you think about how the users will access your service (all access channels – face to face, physical location, on-line, telephone, etc.) and how the delivery of our service may have changed. You need to complete this check box regardless of which of the four options A – D you have ticked.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is NOT required because

(✓)

- A** Does not set out proposals for changes to a policy, service or function – it does not include:
- Proposals for a new or changing policy, service or function
 - Financial decisions (other than approval of routine payments)
 - Proposals for any workforce restructure

or is a 'For Information Only' item – it is a report that simply asks committee / management to note information rather than make or approve any decisions

- B** Has been subject to a recent related EIA that properly considered the issues relevant to this decision or report **(this needs to be attached to the form when returned)**

Or

- C** The decision or report is not relevant to equality in that there is no way it could have any different effect on people in relation to their race, gender or transgender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, maternity or pregnancy, marriage or civil partnership

Or

- D** If none of the above apply a full impact assessment is required

✓

Equality Area	Access to Service			Delivery of Service		
<i>Please complete each category below:-</i>	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nil Impact
Age equality			✓			✓
Race equality			✓			✓
Gender equality			✓			✓
Disability equality	✓			✓		
Sexual orientation equality			✓			✓
Gender re-assignment			✓			✓
Marriage/Civic partnership			✓			✓
Pregnancy / Maternity			✓	✓		
Religion or belief equality			✓			✓
Socio-economic			✓			✓

- Please return this completed form to the Access & Equalities Officer (John Bullock)
- If an EIA is required, please follow the guidance and template available on the internet.

Signed:-

Date:-

URGENCY ITEMS - MINUTE OF DECISION

Delegation arrangements for dealing with matters of urgency

Paragraph 7.2.1 of the Council's Constitution provides that Chief Officers may take urgent decisions if they are of the opinion that circumstances exist which make it necessary for action to be taken by the Council prior to the time when such action could be approved through normal Council Procedures. They shall, where practicable, first consult with the Leader and Chairman (or in their absence the Vice Chairman) and the Opposition Spokesperson of the appropriate committee (Constitution incorporating a scheme of delegation approved by the Council in May 2013)

Subject: Response to NCC 2016/17 Budget Consultation

Re: Option for Change (C10) Public Health Grant Realignment Changes for Homelessness Services.

Appropriate Committee: Homes & Communities

Details of Item:

As reported to Homes & Communities Committee on 18 January 2016, funding provided by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to commission homelessness accommodation and prevention services across the County is being reduced from £2.8m to £1m from April 2016.

The £1m made available from Public Health Grant is identified as an area to be reduced further as part of NCC's wider budget proposals for 2016/17-2018/19, which is currently out for consultation and closes at midnight on **Friday 5 February 2016**.

The proposal contained within the Public Health Grant Re-alignment changes (C10) is to reduce this budget by 7.8%. This equates to a reduction of £78,000 leaving a proposed revised (recurrent) budget of £922,000 from April 2016.

This leaves a shortfall for re-commissioning four accommodation based services across the County (and includes local provision at Russel House, Newark). The current Provider receives £943,550 of funding.

The Homelessness Prevention Service that supported over 2,500 vulnerable individuals a year in the County and received £2,376,605 of funding is being decommissioned from 31 March 2016.

It is therefore proposed that NSDC submit the following response to this particular proposal:

Whilst Newark & Sherwood District Council acknowledge the significant budget pressures faced by Nottinghamshire County Council and fully appreciate this means difficult decisions must be taken, we would contend that proposal C10 will reduce key services that are cost effective in meeting the needs of vulnerable homeless people, with complex needs (including mental health, substance misuse, offending history) across the County.

This funding is used to commission four accommodation based services and combined with the withdrawal of County Council funding for homelessness prevention services across the County from April 2016 will inevitably impact on district council budgets (particularly homelessness and community safety) therefore, simply shunting costs.

However, a significant proportion of individuals supported by the accommodation based services will not meet eligibility criteria for statutory homelessness assistance from the district councils. Therefore, reductions in these services will impact on other public and third sector partners across the system due to the high prevalence of combined risk factors for these individuals.

Those supported by these services also have an unbalanced level of need compared to the general population and the impact of reduced services on their health and wellbeing will be disproportionately large and far-reaching. Decisions should therefore not be based purely on cost-effectiveness and contribution to Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators.

Newark and Sherwood District Council requests that the County Council give consideration to the issues contained within this response in finalising its budget proposals.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, then please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding (Email: leanne.monger@nsdc.info / Tel: 01636 655545).

Record of Decision:

That NSDC's response to the County Council's Budget Consultation is submitted by close of consultation on the 5 February 2016.

Members Consulted:

Councillor Bruce Laughton (email dated 3 February 2016)

Councillor Tim Wendels (email dated 3 February 2016)


Signed
Karen White
Director - Safety

Date: 3 February 2016