

North Somerset Council

Report to the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 3rd November 2022

Subject of Report: Amendments to HomeChoice Allocations Policy

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Kaycee McMahon/Kay Eccles

Key Decision: No

Reason:

Proposed amendments to HomeChoice Allocations Policy are largely minor in nature, with no financial implications and do not represent a significant impact on access to the housing register or to housing generally.

Recommendations

To review and agree the adoption of the proposed changes to the HomeChoice Allocations Policy to ensure the document is current, accurate and reflective of current legislation and good practice.

1. Summary of Report

The HomeChoice Allocations Policy allows for minor wording changes to be made to the policy as required to keep it updated and accurate, where these changes are insubstantial and have no material effect on the application of the Policy. However, where changes cannot be described as insubstantial and mark a change in approach or practice, or they represent additional text or the removal of text, these changes have been tabled for consideration.

Very few of the changes represent a significant departure from current policy or practice and are simply a means of clarification.

2. Policy

Commitment within our Housing Strategy 2022-2027 to keep the HomeChoice Allocations Policy under regular review.

3. Details

There are 18 more significant changes proposed to be made to the Policy, most of these serve as clarifications, or to bring the Policy better in line with legislation and best practice. The aim is to ensure that a resource as scarce as housing is allocated as fairly and consistently as possible according to need. Many changes will lead to improved outcomes for service users.

4. Consultation

Wide consultation across a diversity of internal and external stakeholders including housing colleagues, Housing Sub-Group, our partner Registered Provider landlords, third sector organisations and DLUHC colleagues

5. Financial Implications

N/A

Costs

N/A

Funding

N/A

6. Legal Powers and Implications

These changes have been considered and written in line with, and with guidance from, the following statutory context:

- Housing Act 1996 Part VI, Part VII, all relevant amendments including the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the most recently issued Codes of Guidance pertaining to this legislation.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There are no climate change or environmental implications relevant to this report.

8. Risk Management

Failure to undertake regular reviews of the HomeChoice Allocations Policy would be in direct contravention with the recently published Housing Strategy 2022-2027. The changes ensure the Policy is lawful and compliant with recent legislation and failure to adopt some of these changes would potentially leave us open to legal challenge.

9. Equality Implications

Equality Impact Assessment completed, with no significant concerns of disproportionate negative effect on citizens on the basis of protected characteristics. Increased likelihood of better access to housing register and higher priority bandings as a result of the proposed amendments.

10. Corporate Implications

The Housing Strategy requires that regular reviews of the HomeChoice Allocations Policy are regularly undertaken in order to meet stipulations within the Action Plan.

11. Options Considered

None – review required.

Author:

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Appendices:

HomeChoice Allocations Policy Table of Proposed Changes Final
HomeChoice Allocations Policy 2023 Final

Background Papers: