

Report of the Assistant Director of Housing

Housing Allocations Policy Review

Summary

1. This report sets out proposed updates to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to ensure legal compliance, enhance transparency and consistency, and support effective use of social housing stock. Scrutiny Committee Members are asked to consider the proposed changes ahead of progression to Executive Member Decision Session.
2. The policy refresh is intended to use lessons learned from service experience, adapt to a changing context, support the objectives of other strategies and protocols and to meet new government legal requirements. The proposals to address barriers to accessing housing for people experiencing domestic abuse also form part of the work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.
3. The refresh will incorporate feedback from tenants and other stakeholders, and is subject to consultation. Proposals include embedding a multi-agency panel approach for complex cases alongside streamlined pathways for resolving mental health related housing needs and for members of the armed forces community with a need for social housing.

Background

4. The council's Housing Registrations team carries out complex needs assessments for significant numbers of customers with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes from the council's social housing. The team allocated 700 homes during 2025/26, predominantly for social rent, with around 40% of these being for Registered Provider partners due to successful engagement work with the social landlords owning stock in the city.

5. The Council's Housing Allocations Policy is governed by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), which requires local housing authorities to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and procedures. The proposed updates respond to legislative changes, emerging best practice, operational learning, and the need to improve outcomes for residents who have a need for social housing.

Consultation

6. Consultation on Local Connection elements of the policy has been carried out with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The policy criteria have been clarified in response.
7. Registered Provider partners have been briefed on the proposed amendments with no substantive issues raised to date.
8. Further consultation is planned with Registered Provider partners and to engage with tenants on the wider set of proposed changes. Feedback will inform final policy drafting.
9. Engagement with relevant service managers within the Housing Service and in other services such as Equalities has informed the current proposals. A Legal review of the proposed final revised draft policy will be carried out alongside obtaining other Implications comments.

Options

10. **Option 1:** Approve the proposed policy changes as set out.
11. **Option 2:** Approve the policy changes with amendments, incorporating as a minimum the updated government regulation requirements around Local Connection and Armed Forces prioritisation.

Analysis

12. Annex A sets out a summary of the full set of proposed changes to the Allocations Policy, with risks, impact and mitigation analysis.
13. The proposed changes include:
 - a. Improvements to support domestic abuse applicants (including Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)-related changes).
 - b. Compliance with government requirements on local connection and Armed Forces criteria.

- c. Clearer rules on health and wellbeing priority.
 - d. Improved management of adapted properties.
 - e. Strengthened processes for complex cases.
14. This will use the benefit of existing successful, person-centred assessment and customer care to incorporate enhanced transparency and decision making consistency while achieving legal compliance and better use of social housing stock.
15. It is important to note that where allocations policy changes are dependent on ICT system changes, implementation of the updated policy will be subject to the successful completion of these changes.

Council Plan

16. The priorities set out in the document also align with the council's strategic objectives by setting a framework for working with Registered Providers across the City to make the best use of social housing stock. This supports the aims of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29.
17. Housing affordability is a key challenge for the City, with an average cost of homes around 9 times higher than average earnings and rent levels that are amongst the highest in the north of England. Provision of good quality housing to meet the range of needs across the City's residents is recognised as central to the Council Plan 2023-27 as part of Core Commitments, Affordability and Health and Wellbeing, and to the vision of "One City, for all".
18. The council's Housing Charter vision of One Team, Healthy Homes, Better Lives and principles including We Think Forward, We Think Together and We Think You are embedded within the partnership based and wellbeing focused approach taken in this policy review.

Implications

19. Implications comments will be obtained for the final decision report.

Risk Management

20. Risks include potential impacts on local applicants and increased workload, which will be mitigated through clear guidance criteria and multi-agency partnership working, building on existing relationships with partner agencies, other council teams, and Registered Providers.
21. Further mitigation of these risks will be carried out through staff training, phased implementation, and impacts monitoring.
22. Implications will be obtained after consultation is complete.

Recommendations

23. The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
 - i. Support the proposed policy changes as set out (Option 1);
 - ii. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Housing to approve:
 - a. Amendments to the Allocations Policy appendices;
 - b. Amendments to the Allocations Policy substantive text to achieve legal/regulatory compliance with national government requirements where these are introduced or amended;
 - c. Amendments to the Allocations Policy substantive text to implement minor drafting updates and clarifications.

Reason: To achieve legal compliance and build on existing service successes to respond to evidenced applicant needs and make the best use of social housing stock.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 16 June 2026

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-29 Report to December 2024 Executive

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=68703>

Annexes

Annex A: Housing Allocations Policy Review: Proposals Summary

Annex B: Allocations Human Rights and Equity Analysis Tool (HREAT)

Abbreviations

DAHA: Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

HREAT: Allocations Human Rights and Equity Analysis Tool

ICT: Information and Communications Technology