

Public Document Pack

Please ask for:

Direct dial:

(023) 9254 5340

Fax:

(023) 9254 5587

E-mail:

2ND November 2020

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Housing Board
DATE: 11 November 2020
TIME:: 6.00 pm
PLACE: Virtual
Democratic Services contact: Linda Coote

PAUL GRANT
BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Hook (ex-Officio)
Councillor Mrs Huggins (Mayor) and Councillor Burgess (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mrs Batty	Councillor Mrs Morgan
Councillor Beavis	Councillor Murphy
Councillor Mrs Cully	Councillor Pepper
Councillor Foster-Reed	Councillor Philpott
Councillor Hammond	Councillor Scard
Councillor Hutchison	Councillor Westerby
Councillor Mitchell	

NOTE:

- i. Councillors are requested to note that, if any Councillor who is not a Member of the Board wishes to speak at the Board meeting, then the Borough Solicitor is required to receive not less than 24 hours prior notice in writing or electronically and such notice shall indicate the agenda item or items on which the member wishes to speak.
- ii. Please note that mobile phones should be switched off or switched to silent for the duration of the meeting.
- iii. This meeting may be filmed or otherwise recorded. By attending this meeting, you are consenting to any broadcast of your image and being recorded.

AGENDA

RECOMMENDED
MINUTE FORMAT

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members are required to disclose at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER (Pages 1 - 2)

4. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

(NOTE: The Board is required to receive a deputation(s) on a matter which is before the meeting of the Board provided that notice of the intended deputation and its object shall have been received by the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on 9th November 2020. The total time for deputations in favour and against a proposal shall not exceed 10 minutes)

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(NOTE: The Board is required to allow a total of 15 minutes for questions from Members of the public on matters within the terms of reference of the Board provided that notice of such Question(s) shall have been submitted to the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on 9th November 2020)

6. EXTENSION TO THE NOVUS CONTRACT (Pages 3 - 6)

To advise the Board of the pending end of the External Painting and Communal Area Redecoration (Including Associated Repair Works) Contract 2014-2021 and obtain approval of the recommendation for a 12 month extension to the existing Contract Period, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022.

7. AMENDMENT TO THE ALLOCATION SCHEME (Pages 7 - 30)

This report sets out proposals to amend the Allocation Scheme and associated Banding Scheme.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS

Housing Board
16 September 2020

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD WAS HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2020

Councillors Mrs Batty, Beavis, Burgess, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hammond, Hook, Hutchison, Mrs Jones, Mitchell, Mrs Morgan, Pepper, Philpott, Scard and Westerby

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

An apology for non-attendance was received from Councillor Murphy.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

3. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were none.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS-STANDING ORDER 3.5

There were none.

5. HOUSING SERVICE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing setting out a general update of the Housing Service and requesting that proposals relating to the interim Housing accommodation at Walpole Park be considered.

Members wished to acknowledge and give thanks to the Housing Department for maintaining high service levels across their remit during the difficult Covid situation, in particular in the handling of the "Everyone in Scheme" which had created more cases than first expected.

Members also wished to thank local residents for their understanding whilst the Pods have been in place.

Members were advised that as the 36, currently void, properties became available they would be allocated to the priority cases on the waiting list.

Members welcomed the opportunity afforded by the Government scheme to resolve the homeless issue in the Borough, and hoped that working with partnership agencies would be beneficial.

Members recognised that the Pods would gradually reduce in number over the coming months, and did not want them to be considered a permanent solution for the homeless, but wanted the facility to remain available if the winter months were particularly harsh, or should a second wave of Covid occur.

Housing Board
16 September 2020

Members were advised that a leafleting campaign was about to take place aimed at private landlords to encourage them to approach the Council to rent out their empty properties. Also a survey would be available on the website encouraging local home owners to consider renting out their available properties through the Council.

RESOLVED:

- That the Board approves the phasing out of the interim Housing accommodation at Walpole Park together with associated services.
- That the report of the Head of Housing be noted.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 6.24 pm

Agenda Item 6

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of Meeting:	11 NOVEMBER 2020
Title:	EXTERNAL PAINTING, COMMUNAL REDECORATION AND ASSOCIATED WORKS CONTRACT REVIEW AND EXTENSION
Author:	HEAD OF HOUSING
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To advise the Board of the pending end of the External Painting and Communal Area Redecoration (Including Associated Repair Works) Contract 2014-2021 and obtain approval of the recommendation for a 12 month extension to the existing Contract Period, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022.

Recommendation

The Board approves a 12 month extension to the existing External Painting and Communal Area Redecoration (Including Associated Repair Works) Contract between the Council and Novus Property Solutions Limited, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022 and delegates authority to the Head of Housing and Borough Solicitor to finalise all the necessary documentation to give effect to this decision.

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2014, following a full tendering process, Novus Property Solutions was awarded a 7-year Contract to provide External painting, Communal redecoration and associated works to Gosport Borough Council via an open book Term Partnering Contract worth £400K per annum.
- 1.2 The Contract commenced in October 2014 and currently runs until September 2021 with provision for the Contract Period to be extended by a further 12 months.
- 1.3 The Term Partnering Contract is an 'open book' schedule of rates contract. The schedule of rates includes items typically used on a decorations and minor repairs contract and gives scope for a range of works including renewal of property doors, and replacement fascias and soffits in addition to minor repairs and redecoration as part of a planned project.

2 Report

- 2.1 Novus is a national company but has a locally based office from which the Gosport Contract is managed. All of their direct staff and sub-contractors live within a 15-mile radius of Gosport, and they use local suppliers.
- 2.2 Novus has provided additional community services to the residents of Gosport during the contract period, such as donations to the Gosport Basics Bank, and delivering Easter eggs to the hostels. Novus has also become involved in community projects such as cleaning, weeding and painting a play park, providing free replacement benches made from recycled plastic, and supporting one youth team at Gosport Football club.
- 2.3 In addition to carrying out the planned works, Novus has assisted the Property Services Surveying team with surveying services. They have worked closely with the lead surveyors on projects to ensure the right works are carried out within budget, and have offered solutions to problems using their knowledge of the wider market.
- 2.4 Property Services has been reviewing the Novus contract since 2018. The services have been provided satisfactorily throughout the contract period in accordance with the terms of the contract. The Property Services Team has expanded the work types issued to take greater advantage of Novus' strengths, all within the original schedule of rates.
- 2.5 Novus has been receptive to the changes and has worked with the Council to ensure the service is delivered. While not a responsive service, they have been able to deliver on projects issued at short notice outside of the original plan for a given year.
- 2.6 Novus has responded well to the challenges posed by the Covid crisis, including the shutting down of the planned programme over lockdown. They have worked with Officers to re-plan the programme to ensure works are carried out in a reasonable timescale.
- 2.7 Gosport Borough Council Officers believe that the current arrangements are working well and that there is good reason to extend the contract as permitted within the original contract award.
- 2.8 The additional 12 months enables officers adequate time to undertake a full re-tender process, whilst continuing to undertake works to improve the external condition of our properties.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 If the Contract were to expire on the initial 7 year term, the Council would have to undertake a full retendering process, which would commence in late 2020. Given the limited time and resource available in the Property Services Team there is a significant risk that the procurement process would not complete within the requisite timescale for a full retender.
- 3.2 The Council would need to fund and resource the cost of procurement process at a time when it is predicted significant savings will be required for the Council.
- 3.3 Additional costs would be incurred to cover demobilisation of the existing contract as well as any mobilisation cost for a new contractor.
- 3.4 Extending the existing contract for a 12 month period will provide continuity of service to the residents and more certainty regarding the budget up until September 2022.

Any new contractor would bring new unknown challenges, at a time when the uncertainty around the Covid crisis requires as much stability and predictability around the services we provide as possible.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 There is a provision within the existing Contract with Novus to extend the Contract Period from October 2021 to September 2022.
- 4.2 The contract extension period will enable the Property Services team to review and assess the contract procurement options so that a procurement plan for the new contract can be prepared that will minimise the impact on the planned maintenance programme and any other demands.
- 4.3 The extension would defer any de-mobilisation, and mobilisation costs for a further 12 months, and allow the delivery of the planned programme of external decorations uninterrupted for a further 12 months
- 4.4 Novus has responded well to the challenges posed by the Covid crisis and worked hard to adapt their working practices to maintain the service.

Financial Services comments:	
Legal Services comments:	Contained within the report
Crime and Disorder:	
Equality and Diversity:	All asset management services are universally provided to all GBC's social housing residents.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Outcomes of the Key Actions which require significant input to and/or implementation of activities in Gosport will be included in the Service Improvement Plan as required.
Corporate Plan:	The asset management services provided will contribute to enhancing the environment and assets of the borough making it a great place to live and deliver effective services providing value for money.
Risk Assessment:	Refer to section 3 above
Background papers:	
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Julie Smith

Agenda Item 7

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of meeting:	11 NOVEMBER 2020
Title:	GOSPORT ALLOCATION SCHEME
Author:	JULIE SMITH
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

This report sets out proposals to amend the Allocation Scheme and associated Banding Scheme.

Recommendation

That the Board:

- i) Approves deletion of subsection 15.5 of the Allocation Scheme**
- ii) Approves amendment to the Allocation Scheme and Banding Scheme relating to Exceptional Circumstances**

1.0	Background
1.1	Following the Housing Services Review, the Council's Allocation Scheme was revised and given final approval at Community Board held on 6 March 2019.
1.2	<p>The main changes to the scheme included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updating all references to legislation to ensure compliance with legal requirements, in particular the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.• Amending the qualification criteria to allow a more flexible approach when excluding qualifying applicants from being allocated social housing, by taking into account individual circumstances.• Moving away from a complicated points system to adopting a simple banding scheme.• Reclassification of properties designated for specific categories of applicants to general needs.• Moving from a Choice Based Lettings system to a Direct Lettings System
1.3	The Allocation Scheme is reviewed annually to ensure the content is fit for purpose and accurate in line with legislation, and provides clear guidance for officers.

2.0	The Allocation Scheme
2.1	<i>Section 15</i> of the Allocation Scheme relates to properties designed for specific categories of applicant. <i>Subsection 15.5</i> refers specifically to high rise blocks of flats where there are restrictions on households with children under 5 years of age.
2.2	The only properties with these restrictions are owned and managed by The Hyde Group and are Seaward Tower, Harbour Tower, Blake Court, Garland Court and Hammond Court.
2.3	The Hyde Group has since lifted this restriction and asked that section 15.5 be removed from the Allocation scheme as it is no longer applicable.
3.0	Exceptional circumstances
3.1	The banding scheme supplements the allocation scheme and defines the qualifying housing need for each band.
3.2	It is not possible for the banding scheme to adequately reflect every possible combination of housing need. Applications with exceptional circumstances, which are not met within the banding scheme, are considered by the Priority Housing Panel, which is drawn from senior managers within the Council.
3.3	It is expected that cases heard at panel will be rare and in exceptional circumstances only. The outcome of any hearing will determine either an exceptional or urgent housing need, and it is proposed that the Allocation Scheme and Banding Scheme are reworded to reflect this.
3.4	Therefore, to provide clarity and consistency, it is proposed that subsection 9.4 of the allocation scheme is reworded to state ' <i>The panel will decide if the cases referred to it have an exceptional or urgent need to move</i> ' and the following point is added to the banding scheme at 2 High Band 2.3.15 ' <i>Any case agreed by the Priority Housing Panel to have an urgent need to move on welfare or hardship grounds</i> '.
4.0	Conclusion
4.1	These recommendations will ensure the Council's Allocation Scheme and Banding Scheme are up-to-date, and provide clarity and consistency when dealing with applications with exceptional circumstances.

Financial Services comments:	No comment
Legal Services comments:	
Equality and Diversity:	An EIA of the Allocation Scheme was completed in 2018 and these amendments to it should not adversely impact any protected or vulnerable

	group, though regular review and monitoring of this policy is recommended.
Climate Change implications:	
Crime and Disorder:	
Service Improvement Plan implications:	
Corporate Plan:	Deliver effective services by continually reviewing and improving our processes
Risk Assessment:	
Background Papers:	Community Board Report 07 November 2018 Community Board Report 6 March 2019 Allocation Scheme Banding Scheme
Appendices:	
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Julie Smith

This page is intentionally left blank



GOSPORT

Borough Council

Allocation Scheme

THE GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL ALLOCATION SCHEME

Content

1. Introduction
2. Legal Requirements
3. Eligibility & Qualification
4. Making an application
5. How applications are assessed
6. The Banding Scheme
7. Applications from people with care & support needs
8. Applications from people who are homeless
9. Applications with exceptional circumstance
10. Choice & preference
11. Confidentiality & access to information
12. Offences related to information given or withheld by applicants
13. Allocation of vacant properties
14. Types of Tenancies
15. Properties designated for specific categories of applicants
16. New Developments and Special letting arrangements
17. The offer process
18. Refusing an offer
19. Circumstances in which allocations may be deferred or withheld
20. Review of decisions
21. Review of the Allocation Scheme
22. How to contact Housing Options

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gosport Borough Council aims to provide affordable housing for rent for local residents in housing need, and to create sustainable, balanced communities.
- 1.2 There is a huge demand for affordable rented homes in Gosport. The purpose of the allocation scheme is to define a consistent framework, which can be used to allocate the limited number of vacancies that are available.
- 1.3 The guiding principle is to make sure that homes are allocated fairly and efficiently; taking into account applicants' individual needs and expressed preferences.
- 1.4 In reality, the scheme is a waiting list and not an immediate housing solution, and as a general rule the council aims to avoid registering applications from households who stand very little, or no chance of being rehoused.
- 1.5 Acceptance onto the waiting list is not a guarantee that an offer of accommodation will be made.
- 1.6 The scheme applies to lettings of Gosport Borough Council housing and to lettings of homes owned by private registered providers¹ (PRPs) in Gosport for which the council has nomination rights. It does not include exchanges arranged between existing council or/and PRP tenants.
- 1.7 The scheme is based on five key principles. These are:
 - 1.7.1 To give priority to local residents with the greatest housing need
 - 1.7.2 To make the best use of all the available social housing stock
 - 1.7.3 To enable applicants to make informed choices about their options
 - 1.7.4 To process applications fairly and confidentially, taking appropriate steps to avoid discriminating on grounds of age; being or becoming a transsexual person; being married or in a civil relationship; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion, belief or lack of religion/belief; sex; or sexual orientation
 - 1.7.5 To ensure that we adhere to the Equality Act 2010 & the Human Rights Act 1998

2 Legal Requirements

- 2.1 The 1996 Housing Act, Part 6, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 requires all housing authorities to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing and they must allocate in accordance with that scheme.
- 2.2 In framing their allocation scheme, housing authorities must ensure that priority for social housing goes to those in the greatest need. This includes homeless people, those who need to move on welfare, hardship or medical grounds, or people living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- 2.3 The scheme must also give additional preference to serving or former members of the Armed Forces who have an urgent housing need in line with legislation and the Local Armed Forces Covenant.

¹ Private Registered Providers were formally known as housing associations

- 2.4 Amendments within The Localism Act 2011 enable housing authorities to determine which applicants do or do not qualify for social housing, to reflect local circumstances.
- 2.5 Any qualification criteria must include members of the Armed Forces or former personnel within five years of discharge.
- 2.6 The Right to Move regulations requires that local connection criteria does not prevent social housing tenants from moving into an area to take up work or apprenticeship opportunities
- 2.7 This Allocation Scheme complies with the requirements of the Act and Statutory Instrument 2015/967, and takes into account the Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England, issued by the Communities and Local Government Department in June 2012 and March 2015, the Gosport Homelessness Strategy and the Gosport Tenancy Strategy.

3 Eligibility & Qualification

- 3.1 Anyone wishing to join the allocation scheme **must be eligible** for social housing and must meet the **qualification criteria**.

3.2 Ineligible applicants

- 3.2.1 Certain categories of people are excluded from being offered social housing. These relate to persons who have restricted rights to reside in the United Kingdom or have no access to public funding.
- 3.2.2 It is not practical to define precisely all the circumstances in which the restrictions apply. Anyone unsure of their status should seek detailed advice from Housing Options.

3.3 Qualification criteria

- 3.3.1 To qualify to join the scheme applicants must:
- 3.3.2 Have an identified housing need **AND**, be over 18 years old²
- 3.3.3 **AND** have a local connection to Gosport (see definition below)
OR
- 3.3.4 Be a current Council tenant or a PRP tenant living in the borough **OR**.
- 3.3.5 Be a person whom the council has accepted a duty under the homelessness legislation, **OR**.
- 3.3.6 Be a member of the Armed Forces or former Service personnel within 5 years of discharge or a former Service personnel with no established local connection to a housing authority area, **OR**.
- 3.3.7 Be a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner, **OR**.

² In exceptional circumstances applications may be considered from 16/17 year olds with a guarantor

- 3.3.8 Be a serving or former member of the Reserve Forces needing to move because of a serious injury or disability sustained as a result of their service, **OR**.
- 3.3.9 Be a household in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Priority Housing Panel **OR**
- 3.3.10 Be a current Council or PRP tenant outside of the Gosport area, needing to move to be nearer work³, or in order to take up an offer of work, and where failure to move would cause hardship⁴, and where a move cannot be achieved by a mutual exchange.

3.4 The definition of a local connection is:

- 3.4.1 Anyone resident within the boundaries of Gosport for a minimum of 2 continuous years
- 3.4.2 Ex-Gosport residents, who have previously lived in the borough for five continuous years or more of their adult life.
- 3.4.3 Close family members⁵ of Gosport residents who have lived in the borough for five years or more, who wish to move to the area to give or receive support.
- 3.4.4 Anyone with permanent employment in Gosport, of 16 hours or more per week.
- 3.4.5 Residents of Fareham & Havant will be eligible to be considered for Extra Care Schemes for the elderly only in the Gosport area, where the care is funded by Hampshire County Council.
- 3.4.6 Anyone fleeing violence who does not meet the local connection criteria will be considered under the homeless legislation

3.5 Some categories of eligible and qualifying applicants will be excluded from being allocated social housing for the following reasons:

- 3.5.1 Anyone who is living in adequate accommodation and does not have a housing need.
- 3.5.2 Anyone who owns their own home, except in exceptional circumstances. For example, elderly owner occupiers, who cannot stay in their own home and need to move to sheltered or extra care accommodation.
- 3.5.3 Anyone who has a legal or financial interest in a property or asset that can reasonably be sold⁶ to resolve their housing need.
- 3.5.4 Anyone who has sufficient income or savings⁷ that would be reasonable for them to use to meet their housing need.
- 3.5.5 Anyone who is guilty of unacceptable behaviour⁸ in previous accommodation or of having given false information in order to obtain social housing

³ Work cannot be short-term or marginal in nature.

⁴ Each case will be considered on an individual basis as to the degree of hardship that would result from failure to move.

⁵ A close family member is defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister (or equivalent close step relatives).

⁶ Each case would be considered on an individual basis and the legal circumstances of the financial interest.

⁷ Each case would be considered on an individual basis but the guidelines would be an income of £30,000 or more for a single person/couple, £50,000 for a household with 2 or more children or £60,000 for a household with 4 or more children, and/ or savings sufficient to fund a sustainable housing solution.

⁸ Unacceptable behaviour is defined as behaviour that, if the person were a tenant, would constitute sufficient grounds for eviction. Any exclusion will be reconsidered if the person's behaviour or circumstances change substantially.

- 3.5.6 Anyone who does not have the mental capacity or skills to manage and sustain a tenancy without a high level of support⁹. (See 7, Applications from people with care and support needs)
- 3.5.7 Anyone who has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to increase their priority within the Allocation Scheme. For example, this may apply where an applicant gives up settled accommodation to move into a less settled or overcrowded accommodation. In these circumstances applicants will be excluded for 12 months.
- 3.5.8 Anyone who has previously been deemed not to qualify or has been excluded may make a fresh application if they consider they should now be treated as qualifying, but it will be for the person to show that his or her circumstances have changed.

4 Making an application

- 4.1 Requests to be considered for social housing should be made to Housing Options in the Town Hall Requests may be made in person, by telephone, in writing or by email.
- 4.2 There is an application form to complete
- 4.3 Anyone who is identified or who identifies themselves as having a special need will be assisted appropriately. Types of help may include: Interpretation, Translation, Loop system, or Advocacy service,
- 4.4 A housing options approach is used as a means to managing the housing waiting list, and applicants are offered a full housing options interview.
- 4.5 All discussions will be confidential and the purpose will be to fully understand the applicant's housing need, including their financial circumstances, to explore and offer support in accessing the housing solution which best meets their needs, and to manage expectations about accessing social housing.
- 4.6 All applicants will be advised on the likelihood of being offered social housing and the waiting times where possible. (See 10.3 Choices and Preference)
- 4.7 All applicants will be expected to provide proof of identification and their financial situation, including income and savings. A refusal to provide relevant proofs will result in the application being declined. Support will be provided for applicants having difficulties in providing this information.

5 How applications are assessed

- 5.1 All applications will be assessed using the criteria for the banding scheme (see appendix 1)
- 5.2 All assessments are completed by a Housing Adviser, including those where there is a need to move on medical grounds.

⁹ Each case would be considered based on the identified support need, how it impacts on the individual's ability to manage and sustain a tenancy, and the individual's willingness to engage with the appropriate support.

- 5.3 The medical assessment will be based on the suitability of the applicant's current accommodation and their specific needs. It will reflect additional information provided by or on the applicant's behalf.
- 5.4 To fully understand a person's circumstances it may be necessary to carry out a home visit or to make further enquiries or gather information from a third party or professional to clarify the situation.
- 5.5 It is expected that permission is given by applicants to share or obtain information, relevant to their housing assessment. If permission is refused it will not be possible to fully complete the assessment and will impact on any priority awarded within the banding scheme. (See 11. Confidentiality & access to information)
- 5.6 Part of the housing assessment will be to identify any care and support needs that may impact on managing a future tenancy, and to consider the most appropriate housing solutions to meet these needs. (See section 7 applications from applicants with care and support needs)
- 5.7 All applications will be reassessed if there is a change of address or substantial change in circumstances.

6 The Banding Scheme

- 6.1 Once an applicant's or household's housing need has been fully assessed they will be placed in one of the four bands, within the Banding Scheme, in date order. (See appendix 1)
- 6.2 Additional priority is given, to members of the armed forces over other households within the same band and assessment date.
- 6.3 Most housing situations are reflected within the definitions stated in each band but in some circumstances a decision is needed as to the degree of priority given i.e. high, medium or low.
- 6.4 These circumstances are assessed as follows:
- 6.5 Needing to move for medical reasons**
- The degree of priority given is based on how current accommodation is impacting on any health or care & support issues.
- Any information available from health or social care professionals is taken into consideration, and further information may be sought to clarify the impact of current accommodation.
- 6.5.1 Exceptional priority is given where current housing is causing an immediate life-threatening situation
- 6.5.2 High priority is given where current housing seriously impacts on a severe or progressive illness and a move is essential to prevent a serious risk to health.
- 6.5.3 Medium priority is given where the current housing has a significant impact on health, seriously affecting functional abilities and activities of daily living.
- 6.5.4 Low priority is given where current housing has some moderate or variable impact on health.
- 6.6 Wheelchair users needing to move into an accessible property**

These assessments may involve an occupational therapist, who will initially explore the possibility of whether the current property could be adapted to meet the individual's needs. If this is not possible a recommendation for housing is made.

- 6.6.1 Exceptional priority is given where a wheelchair user is living in a property which is not adapted to meet their needs and is causing an immediate life-threatening situation.
- 6.6.2 High priority is given when the current property is unsuitable for a wheelchair user and the individual cannot access basic facilities independently, or where there are high care needs that could be better met in a more suitable property.
- 6.6.3 Medium priority is given when there is an identified need to move but the current property is not unsuitable for a wheelchair user.
- 6.6.4 Low priority is given when applicants who are currently adequately housed but living with their parents, would like to live independently and have been assessed as having a need to move to an accessible property and no suitable properties are available in the private sector which meet their needs.

6.7 Needing to move because of overcrowding

The following criteria are used to assess overcrowding:

- 6.7.1 Any adult sharing a bedroom or bedsit with someone who is not included in their application.
- 6.7.2 Two adults of opposite sex not living together as partners sharing a bedroom
- 6.7.3 Three or more people of any age sharing a bedroom
- 6.7.4 Two children of the opposite sex, where at least one child is 10 or over, sharing a bedroom
- 6.7.5 Anyone sleeping in a room that is not a bedroom, or could not reasonably be used as a bedroom.
- 6.7.6 Two persons of different generations (at least 15 years age difference is taken as a generation) and at least one person is 16 or over.
- 6.7.7 Two persons of any age sharing a bedroom under 10.2 square metres

Please Note: Two children under the age of 10 sharing a bedroom, regardless of sex, are not considered to be overcrowded.

7 Applications from people with care & support needs

- 7.1 Applications for social housing will only be considered from individuals, who have the mental capacity, and the skills, to manage a tenancy, and can either live independently or with the relevant support in place to meet their individually assessed needs, and are prepared to engage with this support.
- 7.2 Elderly applicants with care needs will need a care assessment and the appropriate care provision in place.

- 7.2 Anyone unable to manage a tenancy or identified as having a higher level housing related support need¹⁰ will be referred to an appropriate supported housing provider in the area.¹¹
- 7.3 Supported housing providers will assist individuals, when ready to live independently, to access various appropriate move-on solutions i.e. private renting, lodgings, social housing, move-on schemes, or returning to the family home.
- 7.4 A quota of social housing tenancies¹² are made available each year to support providers in accessing move-on accommodation.
- 7.5 Separate arrangements have been agreed with children service's to prioritise the needs of foster carers and young people leaving care, subject to a pre-agreed quota of nominations.

8 Applications from people who are homeless

- 8.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a duty on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their area. It also requires housing authorities to provide services to all those affected, not just those who have a priority need under the primary legislation - that is, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
 - 8.1.1 There is an enhanced prevention duty, meaning the council is required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage, AND
 - 8.1.2 There is a duty for those who are already homeless for the council to support households, for 56 days, to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.
 - 8.1.3 If homelessness is not prevented or relieved, a main housing duty is owed to households who are eligible, have a priority need, and are not homeless intentionally.
- 8.2 The Housing Act 1996, Part 7, as amended by the Homeless Act 2002 provides the statutory guidelines for assessing whether a housing authority has a main housing duty to homeless households.
 - 8.2.1 Where a main housing duty is owed this housing authority will discharge its duty by either:
 - 8.2.2 an offer of a private sector tenancy, **or**
 - 8.2.3 an offer of a tenancy via the allocation scheme, **or**
 - 8.2.4 an offer of temporary accommodation until a settled home is available
 - 8.2.5 There will be no choice as to tenure type offered; it will be purely subject to availability, suitability and affordability.
- 8.3 Preference for specific areas will be taken into consideration, where possible, but cannot be guaranteed. (see 10, Choice & Preference)

¹⁰ Housing related support can assist with budgeting; managing debts; finding somewhere to live and setting up home; gaining access to other support and community services; health and wellbeing; domestic, life or social skills; and accessing employment and training.

¹¹ Supported housing is not allocated via the normal housing waiting list.

¹² The number of social housing tenancies made available is based on: previous demand for move-on accommodation, the demand generally for social housing, and the availability of alternative housing solutions in the area.

- 8.4 Homeless people whom the housing authority has no statutory duties to house are provided for within the banding scheme.
- 8.5 Rough sleepers within the borough are supported to access emergency hostel bed spaces, where their needs are assessed and support is available.

9 Applications with exceptional circumstances

- 9.1 It is not possible for the banding scheme to adequately reflect every possible combination of housing needs.
- 9.2 Applications with exceptional circumstances, which are not met within the banding scheme, are considered by a Priority Housing Panel.
- 9.3 The panel will be drawn from senior managers within Gosport Borough Council
- 9.4 The panel will decide the appropriate degree of priority to be given to cases referred to it.

10 Choice and Preference

- 10.1 During the initial interview with a housing adviser applicants will be assisted in making an informed choice of which housing option would best meet their housing needs.
- 10.2 An informed choice is made when the consequences of any preferences is fully understood.
- 10.3 Applicants who qualify to join the waiting list will be advised on the likelihood of being offered social housing, and approximate waiting times¹³, where possible, for their preferred type of property and areas, to help them make the best choices in achieving the right housing outcome.
- 10.4 Applicants can be registered for their preferred property type and any local area where social housing is available.
- 10.5 In some circumstances, a person's choice of area and property type will impact on the priority awarded. If the priority is based on an urgent need to move and there is clearly going to be a lengthy wait for their preferred choice, the exceptional or high priority will not be awarded unless a more realistic outcome is considered.
- 10.6 Choice will be restricted for applicants where there is a homeless duty because of the limited time available to find a suitable home.

11 Confidentiality and access to information

- 11.1 The council will take reasonable steps to verify information provided by applicants in support of their application.

¹³ Waiting times vary for different property types and areas, and will only be a guide, based on the banding, time on list, and the number of properties offered within each band in the previous 12 months.

- 11.2 The council will retain information provided by applicants securely and confidentially compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations. More information on how personal data is used is available on Gosport Borough Councils website www.gosport.gov.uk
- 11.3 Applicants may request a copy of information held by the council on their application. This may not include information provided by a third party.
- 11.4 The council will share relevant information with its housing partners (PRPs) prior to an offer of a tenancy. This will include financial information and details of any tenancy related support needs.

12 Offences related to information given or withheld by applicants

- 12.1 It is an offence for anyone to give false information, or withhold information the housing authority has reasonably requested, in connection with the allocation of social housing.
- 12.2 Anyone found to have given false information to obtain priority for social housing will be excluded from the waiting list (see 3.5.5 Eligibility & Qualification)
- 12.3 S.146 of the 1996 Housing Act gives a housing authority the power to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant, or a person acting at the tenant's instigation.

13 Allocation of vacant properties

- 13.1 The definition of an allocation is when a person is selected to be:
Either offered a tenancy of a Gosport Borough Council property,
OR nominated to be an assured or an assured shorthold tenant of a property held by a Private Registered Provider
- 13.2 It does not include leasehold properties held by either the council or a Private Registered Provider, used to house the homeless or properties let through the rented accommodation in the private sector scheme (RAPS).
- 13.3 Properties available for letting within the allocation scheme will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority for each specific property. This means looking first at applicants in the Exceptional Band, then the High Band, and so on. Priority between applicants in the same band will be determined in date order, by the length of time applicants have been within that band.
- 13.4 The only exceptions to this are:
 - 13.4.1 where a property has level access and is suitable for adaptations to meet the needs of someone waiting for accessible housing;
 - 13.4.2 **or** where a property is in a block or area where there has been a management problem and certain consideration needs to be given to the suitability of the next tenant. Any decision not to offer a property to the next eligible household on the waiting list in this circumstance must be reasonable and accountable and in the best interest of all persons it impacts on.

- 13.4.3 or where a property is designated for a specific category of applicant.(see 15. Properties designated for specific categories of applicants).
- 13.5 Applicants can only be selected for property types that they have included in their application and if they meet any specific criteria. Applicants will be asked to indicate their preference for the type of property they wish to be considered for in terms of location, property types, floor levels and type of landlord. (Council or PRP)
- 13.6 The number of bedrooms a household can be considered for will be determined according to the following criteria:
- One bedroom for every adult couple
 - One bedroom for any other adult aged 16 or over
 - One bedroom for any two children of the same sex under 16
 - One bedroom for any two children regardless of sex under 10
 - One bedroom for any other child
- 13.7 There may be circumstances where an additional bedroom is required i.e. for a carer or when downsizing; these situations will be considered based on evidenced need and affordability.

14 Types of Tenancies

- 14.1 There is a duty on every local housing authority to publish a tenancy strategy which reflects the demand on social housing within the local area, and which all registered providers of social housing should have regard to in framing their tenancy policies.
- 14.2 All social housing providers should have their own tenancy policy¹⁴ which details the type of tenancies being used.
- 14.3 Applicants will be advised during the offer process, the type of tenancy being offered.

15 Properties designated for specific categories of applicants

Some types of properties are designated for specific categories of applicants. These are:

- 15.1 **Sheltered housing schemes**, for the elderly, i.e. over 60 or over 55 with specific support needs which can be met in sheltered housing.
- 15.2 **Extra Care housing schemes**, for elderly residents in Gosport, Fareham & Havant, with an eligible care need under the Care Act 2014. Nominations will be prioritised based on the care need level required to meet the desired care mix within the scheme at the time a vacancy becomes available.
- 15.3 Homes that have been **purpose built, adapted or are considered accessible** by people with **mobility needs**. These properties may be let in consultation with an occupational therapist.
- 15.4 **PRP over 55 blocks** which are reserved for mature or elderly tenants only.

¹⁴ The tenancy policy relating to social housing managed by Gosport Borough Council is available on the council's website

15.5 **High rise blocks of flats** where there are restrictions on households with children under 5.

15.6 **Households with Pets** – Some properties have restrictions on the ownership of dogs, cats and other pets, such as certain sheltered accommodation and PRP-owned accommodation. This may affect the rehousing for applicants who have pets they wish to keep

16 New Developments and Special letting arrangements

16.1 Special lettings arrangements may be applied for new developments or where a large number of homes are being let in one location, for example, following a major refurbishment.

16.2 Any special lettings arrangements will follow the general principles of the allocations scheme, but may incorporate variations in order to create a more balanced community.

16.3 Details of any special lettings arrangements will be published on the council website prior to the properties being allocated.

16.4 Special lettings arrangements will only apply to first lettings. Any subsequent vacancies will be let subject to the normal allocation scheme conditions.

17 The offer process

17.1 Applicants who have been selected for an offer of Gosport Borough Council accommodation will be contacted and invited to view the property, at which they will have the opportunity to discuss any specific repairs that they feel are required. This viewing may happen whilst the outgoing tenant is still in occupation with their permission.

17.2 If the property is accepted an appointment is arranged to sign the tenancy agreement and to discuss any support and assistance that the applicant may require in managing their new tenancy

17.3 When applicants are selected for an offer of a Private Registered Provider's property, their details will be sent to the PRP, who will contact them direct, to confirm acceptance of the nomination and make arrangements to view the property and sign the tenancy agreement.

17.4 Where an offer of a tenancy is made to joint applicants, at least one of the persons must be a qualifying person and all of them must be eligible.

17.5 The council will share financial information and details of any tenancy related support needs with its housing partners prior to an offer of a tenancy.

18 Refusing an offer

18.1 The intention is to make the right offer of accommodation, the first time, so applicants are encouraged to only register for property types and areas that they wish to live in.

- 18.2 Anyone wishing to refuse an offer will be expected to give details explaining their reasons.
- 18.3 If, as a result of more than one successive refusal, it is considered that all offers met their recorded preference; were suitable for their needs; there has been no change of circumstances; and there are no extenuating circumstances; their application may be cancelled.
- 18.4 Applicants will be advised in writing if a further refusal will result in their application being cancelled.
- 18.5 Anyone removed from the waiting list for refusing properties will not be able to reapply for 12 months, unless there has been a substantial change in circumstances.
- 18.6 Homeless applicants, where there is a statutory duty to rehouse, will be advised in writing that a refusal of suitable housing will result in the council ending its duty. This will result in the termination of temporary accommodation where this is being provided.

19 Circumstances in which allocations may be deferred or withheld

- 19.1 There are some circumstances in which offers of housing may be deferred or withheld, irrespective of an applicant's priority under the scheme. They are:
- 19.2 Applicants who have rent arrears owing to a current or previous landlord, and do not have a suitable arrangement in place which they are adhering to in order to address the arrears.¹⁵
- 19.3 Applicants who are in significant breach of their tenancy conditions or have failed to maintain their existing home to a satisfactory standard, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- 19.4 Applicants, or members of their household, who are known to the council's Community Safety Team, as perpetrators of anti-social behaviour may be restricted from receiving offers of accommodation through the scheme. Such restrictions may apply to specific accommodation or in general. Applicants will be notified as and when restrictions are being applied.
- 19.5 Rehousing of some applicants with an offending background may be subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Agreements (MAPPA). In such circumstances the allocation of housing will be based on appropriate risk assessment with the relevant agencies concerned.

20 Review of decisions

- 20.1 All applicants have the right to ask for a review of decision made regarding their application. This includes decisions in relation to:
- 20.2 Ineligibility or exclusions from the scheme
- 20.3 Qualification for the scheme

¹⁵ Each case will be considered on an individual basis in liaison with the relevant landlord, and will depend on the level of arrears, the reasons for the arrears, the steps being taken to clear the arrears, the housing need, and any personal related circumstances. Any social housing tenant on a suspended possession order will not be offered a property without their current landlord's agreement.

- 20.4 The housing needs assessment
- 20.5 The council's statutory duty to the homeless
- 20.6 Removal from the waiting list
- 20.7 When an allocation is deferred or withheld
- 20.8 A request for a review of a decision must be made within 21 days. Late requests will only be considered in extenuating circumstances.
- 20.9 Reviews will be conducted by a senior officer or manager, based in housing options, who was not involved in the original decision. The applicant will be notified of the decision in writing. This will also outline an applicant's legal rights and the time scale for any further action.

21 Review of the Allocation Scheme

- 21.1 The allocation scheme will be reviewed annually. Where appropriate, recommendations will be made to the Chair of the Community Board to authorise changes to the scheme.

How to contact Housing Options

Email housingadviceteam@gosport.gov.uk

Telephone 023 9254 5476

9am-5pm Monday - Friday

In writing Gosport Borough Council, Town Hall, High St, Gosport PO12 1EB

Appendices

(1) The Banding Scheme in full

(2) Quota of properties for vulnerable applicants nominated by organisations working in partnership with Gosport Borough Council.

End of document

This page is intentionally left blank

THE BANDING SCHEME

1 Exceptional Circumstances Band

1.1 This band is for applicants where exceptional circumstances have been identified, this would involve serious life-threatening situations; where there is an over-riding priority on medical or social grounds and in circumstances where it is necessary to enable someone to move to release a very desirable property.

1.2 Additional priority within this band is given, to members of the armed forces over other households within the same band and assessment date.

1.3 Definitions of Exceptional Circumstances

1.3.1 Applicants awaiting accessible or sheltered housing before they can be discharged from hospital.

1.3.2 Applicants whose household includes someone who has been assessed as having an exceptional need to move into an accessible property.

1.3.3 Applicants whose household includes someone with a serious life-threatening medical condition or care need, which is directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions.

1.3.4 Social Housing tenants who wish to move from disabled persons or mobility units which they no longer require.

1.3.5 Any case agreed by the Priority Housing Panel to have an exceptional need to move on welfare or hardship grounds.

2 High Band

2.1 The High Band is for those applicants with an urgent need to move, and have been assessed as high priority.

2.2 Additional priority within this band is given, to members of the armed forces over other households within the same band and assessment date.

2.3 Definitions of an urgent need to move

2.4.1 Social housing tenants who need to move because their home is about to be demolished, redeveloped or subject to major works.

2.4.2 Private Sector tenants living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, that the council's private sector housing team has identified as a serious risk to health and enforcement action is unable to resolve.

- 2.4.3 Gosport Borough Council tenants and tenants of Private Registered Providers within Gosport for whom urgent management transfers¹ have been approved. Such cases will be reviewed on a regular basis and priority will be time limited and may be restricted to certain property types and floor levels.
- 2.4.4 Vulnerable applicants who are ready to move on to independent living and have been nominated by their supported housing provider. This is subject to an agreed quota per year.
- 2.4.5 Applicants who have been assessed as having an urgent need to move to an accessible property.
- 2.4.5 Social Housing tenants who are under occupying a property and wish to move to a smaller property.
- 2.4.6 Applicants living in a Gosport Borough Council property or a Private Registered Provider property in Gosport who are entitled to succeed to a tenancy but cannot remain in their current home as the property is under occupied.
- 2.4.8 Applicants nominated by children's services² who wish to foster or adopt children and whose current accommodation is not large enough. Subject to an agreed quota per year
- 2.4.9 Applicants that are care leavers³ who have been assessed as ready to live independently and have the ability to manage a tenancy.
- 2.4.10 Applicants living in seriously overcrowded accommodation where they lack three or more bedrooms.
- 2.4.11 Applicants, whose household includes someone with a medical condition or a care need, which is directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions, and has been assessed as a high priority.
- 2.4.12 Social housing tenants either living within or outside the Gosport Borough Council local authority boundary, that need to move to be nearer their work, or to take up an offer of work, and where failure to move would cause hardship, and there are no suitable exchanges available.
- 2.4.13 Applicants where a main housing duty is owed under the homelessness legislation and no other housing option is available.
- 2.4.14 Households with dependent children, or vulnerable adults, who are threatened with homelessness and the homelessness cannot be prevented. All households must have a personal housing plan in place and be actively engaging with the plan.

¹ Management transfers are nominations from social landlords only, to resolve serious neighbourhood issues.

² Hampshire Children's Services only

³ Care leavers nominated by Hampshire Children's Services only

3 Medium Bands

- 3.1 This Medium Band is for applicants who have a significant housing need, and have been assessed as medium priority.
- 3.2 Additional priority within this band is given, to members of the armed forces over other households within the same band and assessment date.
- 3.4 Definitions of a significant housing need.**
 - 3.4.1 Applicants whose household includes someone who has been assessed as needing to move to an accessible property, and has been assessed as a medium priority.
 - 3.4.2 Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation where they lack two bedrooms.
 - 3.4.3 Applicants whose household includes someone with a medical condition or a care need, which is directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions, and has been assessed as a medium priority.

4 Low Bands

- 4.1 This band is for applicants who have an identified housing need and have been assessed as having a low priority.
- 4.2 Additional priority within this band is given, to members of the armed forces over other households within the same band and assessment date.
- 4.3 Definitions of an identified housing need**
 - 4.3.1 Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation where they lack one bedroom.
 - 4.3.2 Applicants whose household includes anyone with a medical condition or a care need, which is directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions, and has been assessed as a low priority.
 - 4.3.3 Homeless applicants who have been found intentionally homeless or no main housing duty is owed.
 - 4.5.4 Applicants who are threatened with homelessness and the homelessness cannot be prevented. All applicants must have a personal housing plan in place and be actively engaging with the plan.
 - 4.5.5 Applicants assessed as needing accessible housing but are currently adequately housed and living with their parents, but are wishing to live independently and no suitable properties to meet their needs are available in the private sector.

Appendix A(1)

[Type text]