

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Hyde Group has since lifted this restriction and asked that section 15.5 be removed from the Allocation scheme as it is no longer applicable.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:	
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