

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

ALLOCATIONS POLICY – DAMP AND MOULD1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for an updated Allocations Policy to reflect the Council's approach to damp and mould.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the updated Allocations Policy be approved.

3. Detail

In February 2023, Cabinet approved an action plan to address concerns regarding damp and mould. One of the actions within the plan was: *Consider if any changes are required to Allocations Policy to reflect the circumstances of those living in properties with damp and mould.*

The Allocations Policy sets out who can apply for social housing, how priority is given to different applicants and how the housing register is maintained. It is reviewed annually, with the last review being completed and approved by Cabinet in November 2022. The policy has been reconsidered in light of the recent work on damp and mould and some amendments to specifically address this are proposed. A full review and consultation with applicants will be undertaken later this year, in accordance with the usual timetable for review and approval. The policy is at appendix 1.

The following amendment is proposed, to give high priority to those experiencing issues with damp and mould:

Additional Band 1 reason - Applicants whose home has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team or Housing Repairs Team as having a significant damp and mould problem which cannot be resolved whilst they are in occupation.

Under the policy the Head of Housing already has discretion to offer a direct allocation in urgent cases. It is proposed that the wording is amended so that it is clear that property condition is also a valid reason why this may be approved:

Urgent housing management cases – such cases are exceptional and an offer must be approved by the Head of Housing, each case will be considered in regards to its individual circumstances. A direct allocation will reflect the urgency of the issue that the tenant is experiencing, this can include issues regarding tenant welfare or property condition.

An updated policy and an Equality Impact Assessment are included in the appendix 2.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no additional financial implications at this stage of the policy setting process. Any costs associated with the delivery of the action plan to address concerns regarding damp and mould will be contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications in the future, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

There are no direct legal implications that arise from this report, this amendment to the policy addresses the duty within the Housing (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act that requires a property is fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and for the duration of the tenancy.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

There were no Unison comments in relation to this report.

8. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL Sensitive information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

10. Background Papers

Nil