

# **Waverley Borough Council Scrutiny Review**

**Review of Waverley's Allocation Policy  
Scoping Document**

**September 2021**

Background information		
1.	Title of proposed review	Review of Waverley's Allocation Policy
2.	Proposed by	Cllr Richard Seaborne
3.	Chair of the Group (once confirmed)	TBC
4.	Membership of the group (once confirmed)	Cllr Christine Baker Cllr Patricia Ellis Cllr Jacquie Keen Gillian Martin (Tenants Panel representative) Cllr Michaela Wicks Cllr George Wilson
5.	Scrutiny Policy Officer supporting the review	Mark Mills
6.	Service officer(s) supporting the review	Michael Rivers (Housing Needs Manager) Annalisa Howson (Housing Service Improvement Manager) Alice Lean and Esther Lyons (Housing Strategy and enabling Manager)
7.	How does this review link with the corporate priorities within the Corporate Strategy?	The review directly relates to the Council's priority to provide <i>Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups.</i>

Purpose and objectives		
8.	Reason for / background to the review	<p>Local Authorities have a duty under Housing Act 1996 to have an Allocation Scheme and are required to have regard to statutory guidance. An updated code of guidance was published January 2021.</p> <p>The Regulator for Social Housing Tenancy Standard states that: Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how their lettings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) make the best use of available housing</li> <li>(b) are compatible with the purpose of the housing</li> <li>(c) contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities.</li> </ul> <p>There should be clear application, decision-making and appeals processes.</p> <p>In 2019 the Housing O&amp;S scrutiny review Attitudes to Council Housing: Pride or Prejudice recommended that:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a review is undertaken of the Council's Allocation policy, to ensure an easy application process for all eligible residents, including local workers, and more representative demand data is collected, and</li> <li>• the Council should expand develop its communication on allocation criteria to better educate members of the public on who is eligible for social housing.</li> </ul> <p>In 2020 Housing Strategy and Enabling Team completed an affordability study and have commissioned a Housing Needs Survey which will provide up to date local information to inform the allocation scheme.</p> <p>In August 2021, Waverley Borough Council committed to rehoming five to ten families from Afghanistan.</p>
9.	Purpose (what does the review hope to achieve)	<p>The main focus areas of the review will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence that the allocation policy results in fair access and allocation of homes</li> <li>• ensure policy meet statutory requirements</li> <li>• ensure policy meet regulatory standards</li> <li>• align policy with emerging local housing needs and affordability findings</li> <li>• examine communications to improve awareness of who social housing is for and how to apply</li> </ul>
10.	Objectives (what actions / outcomes are expected as a result of the review?)	<p>The objective of the review is to confirm that the allocation scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is fit for purpose and delivering fair, transparent and efficient access to social housing</li> <li>• reflects current statutory and regulatory requirements, and</li> <li>• reflects local housing need and affordability, and</li> <li>• is managed by team with sufficient resources to administer it effectively</li> </ul>
11.	Research questions (any questions posed so far for the review to cover)	<p>Does the scheme meet statutory and regulatory requirements?          Who has been successful in accessing social housing?          Do stakeholders understand the scheme?          Does the scheme reflect local housing need?</p>

Methodology		
12.	What form will this review take (e.g. half day, full day,	Starting in October 2021 and delivering final report in the January committee cycle.

	meetings over several weeks/months, standing Group until...)?	Regular meetings every two to three weeks of no more than two hours each.  Initial considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many meetings would be manageable?</li> <li>• Is it possible to meet in person?</li> <li>• Would the group prefer to a) start with a half day introduction to allocations policy (what it is, what it says, how to promote it and updates since adopted) and the findings of the legal review (identify strengths and weaknesses of scheme) or b) begin with the introduction and the data and then have legal review at the next session?</li> </ul>
13.	What evidence will need to be gathered in order to undertake this review (e.g. current policies, satisfaction data, literature)?	Current Allocation Policy Household, banding priority and property size data on who housed in last two/ three? years Household, banding priority and property need data of those on register Legal review findings Housing Need and affordability studies– to review financial and local connection criteria Housing need internal audit findings (if relevant) Housing need redacted allocation complaints and responses Input from stakeholders and partners
14.	What methods will be used to compile information for this review (e.g. desktop research, public consultation, interviews, focus groups)?	Desktop research, gathering evidence from stakeholders and consultation with Tenants Panel.
15.	What (if any) external resource will be required (e.g. external expertise, consultants etc)?	Legal review
Limitations and risks		
16.	What does this review <b>not</b> include in its scope? (Consider remit of the committee and purpose of the review.)	Comprehensive rewrite of policy Review of choice based letting system Review of void standard ? Shared ownership allocation scheme?

17.	What is the Council's risk appetite for the issue being reviewed?	The Council's agreed risk appetite can be found <a href="#">here</a> (item 74/18).
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Post review		
18.	To where will the recommendations ultimately be addressed (e.g. Executive, Council, external organisation)?	Executive
19.	When will the final report be presented to the parent committee?	January 2022
20.	When will the report be presented to Executive/Council (meeting dates)?	February 2022
21.	How will the impacts of the review be measured?	Evidence of meeting statutory and regulatory requirements Increase in housing applications reflecting local need
22.	When / how often will the impacts be assessed?	Annually through Housing O&S
23.	When / how often will the impacts be reported to O&S?	Annually

Some of the sections of this document may need to be completed after the first meeting of the Group.