

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2 March 2022

REPORT TITLE:	SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME (PROPERTY POOL PLUS)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to Wirral's continued participation in a Liverpool City Region sub regional social housing allocations scheme, to approve the final revised Allocations Policy following the outcome of a formal consultation process and support the arrangements for the introduction of a new IT system to support the operation of the new policy and scheme.

If approved, the revised Allocations Policy would support at least two aims of the Wirral Plan 2021-26:

- Deliver quality, affordable and sustainable homes; and
- Prevent and relieve homelessness.

This matter is a Key Decision as it affects all Wards and all 23,500 households occupying housing owned by Registered Providers of Social Housing as well as any household wishing to apply for social housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Housing Committee:

- (1) approve the proposed Allocations policy and scheme as set out in Appendix A of this report;
- (2) Support for the implementation of the new scheme to coincide with the procurement of a suitable IT system, which would be needed to support the operation of the new policy and scheme;
- (3) That the commencement of the tender process for the procurement of the provision of the IT software system be approved;

- (4) That the Head of Housing be authorised to award the contract within approved budget and to the highest scoring tender within approved budget and in accordance with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) criteria;
- (5) That the Head of Housing be authorised to enter into arrangements with the other participating local authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool and Sefton), to govern the implementation and future operation of the allocations scheme, including the appointment of a Property Pool Plus Co-ordinator to work across all local authority areas.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 In order to ensure that the Allocations Policy is in line with current legislation, case law and good practice, it is necessary to periodically update and review the current iteration. Committee is required to approve a new social housing Allocations Policy and Scheme and to support the work relating to the procurement of an IT system and appointment of a Coordinator across the LCR necessary to implement and operate it.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 An independent review of the existing Choice Based Letting Scheme operated across the City Region was undertaken in 2019 in consultation with Cabinet Members, Officers and partners resulting in a series of findings and recommendations. One of the key recommendations was the advantages of continuing with a LCR Choice Based Lettings scheme due to the benefits to the participating local authorities, partners and customers of the scheme. Therefore, to not approve the continued participation in this sub-regional scheme was discounted by all partners due to a number of benefits including cost efficiencies for procurement of single IT system, consistent and single approach for registration and priority banding awards, transparency of process and more efficient and quicker process for nominations and matching to enable lettings process.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members have previously approved the common Choice Based Lettings and Allocations Policy for the 5 participating Local Authorities – Sefton, Halton, Liverpool, Wirral and Knowsley. The allocations scheme has been known as the Property Pool Plus scheme (PPP). PPP is a partnership between the aforementioned local housing authorities plus numerous private registered providers of social housing. PPP provides a common procedure and approach to allocating social rented housing, using a choice-based method to let homes.
- 3.2 The LCR partnership collectively undertook a procurement process for an IT system to operate the CBL Scheme with a current contract held with Abritas (now Civica), which has been critical to underpin the operation of the scheme and policy. The IT system has been upgraded over the life of the scheme and the contractual arrangements with Civica extended until a new IT system is procured. Wirral Council have agreed to lead on this piece of work with assistance from all other Scheme Member LAs.
- 3.3 The operation of the scheme, including the IT system, in Wirral is undertaken in-house, by the Property Pool Plus Team.
- 3.4 PPP provides a single point of access for customers/applicants to apply for social housing, complete a single application process, and join a single housing register. It also provides local authorities with a single means to provide nominations, including for homeless applicants. The aspiration remains that the local authorities continue to

facilitate a single lettings approach for scheme partners and customers when allocating and letting social housing across the city region.

3.5 Housing Allocations Policy review

- 3.6 The Local Authority, in collaboration with other local authority members of the Property Pool Plus scheme, commissioned an independent review of how social rented housing is allocated across the Liverpool City Region.
- 3.7 The review was carried out during 2019. A total of 15 recommendations were made to improve how social housing is allocated. The primary recommendation was to revise the current rules for allocating social rented housing, to make them fully compatible with the law and accord with nationally recognised best practice.

3.8 Context

- 3.9 The Local Authority has a public law duty to accept applications from any member of the public, for an allocation of social rented housing.
- 3.10 The Local Authority has nomination agreements with housing associations who hold stock in the borough, which allows people who have applied to the Council for an allocation of social rented housing, to be allocated an available property from a housing association.
- 3.11 The Local Authority chooses to hold a common database of applicants and a common set of rules allocating social rented housing, with four other local authorities across the LCR. This scheme is known as Property Pool Plus.
- 3.12 The Local Authority is required to allocate social rented housing in accordance with statute, statutory guidance and regulations and orders issued by the UK Parliament and the UK Government. The local authority is obliged to provide information to anyone who is interested in making an application for social rented housing. The law sets out how local authorities must handle applications, make decisions, and conduct reviews, about allocations.
- 3.13 Eligibility for an allocation of social housing is determined by immigration law, resulting in local authorities having no discretion on this matter. The law specifies that some persons must be given a reasonable priority for an allocation. These include people who are homeless, owed a homelessness duty, occupying unsatisfactory accommodation, need to move on medical or welfare grounds, or need to move to avoid hardship. When allocating social rented housing, the local authority must avoid discriminating against any person and ensure it enhances equality of opportunity for all. The best interests of children must also be taken account of when social rented housing is allocated. The Local Authority is afforded no powers over these matters nor does it have any discretion as to how these matters are administered.
- 3.14 In respect of the above matters, a range of administrative changes are being proposed to bring practice and procedure in line with current legislative requirements.

3.15 The Local Authority has powers to determine certain aspects of how social rented housing is allocated in respect of the following matters.

1. **Qualification** – which persons should qualify or be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing.
2. **Choice** – how much choice a person might be entitled to express in regard to the social rented housing they wish to be allocated.
3. **Additional Preference** – persons who should be given an extra favour when social rented housing is being allocated.
4. **Priority** – persons wishing to be allocated social rented housing should be selected for an allocation.

3.15 The changes being proposed for the above following matters are set out below, with an explanation of the current policy position alongside the proposed new rules.

3.16 Qualification

3.17 Incapable of holding a tenancy agreement –

- A child aged 16 or 17 years of age, will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing, unless a suitable party can act as a trustee and hold a legal tenancy until the child reaches the age of 18 years. This rule prevails in the current policy, no changes are being proposed to this matter.
- A child, defined as a child in need under the Children's Act 1989, section 17, (a child in need or a looked after child up to the age of 17) will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This rule prevails presently but is not expressly made clear in the current policy, an amendment is proposed to rectify this.
- A person lacking the mental capacity to hold a tenancy, will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This rule prevails presently but is not expressly made clear in the current policy, an amendment is proposed to rectify this.

3.18 Unacceptable behaviour

3.19 A person who is guilty of unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant, will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This rule prevails in the current policy; however, amendments are proposed to make it clearer what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. It is proposed the new policy will make it clear that anyone with a spent conviction (where a **predetermined time period has elapsed since the date of the conviction**) under the Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974, section 4, (1) will not be taken account of when making decisions about whether a person should be disqualified. The proposed new definition of unacceptable behaviour is as follows:

- Having an unspent conviction (where a **criminal record that, for a specific period of time (the length of which is determined by the seriousness of**

the crime) can still be disclosed) of a serious offence, committed in the locality of their property, against a person with a right to reside or occupy or accommodation.

- Having an unspent conviction of a serious offence, committed elsewhere against the Local Authority or a Registered Provider or agents acting on their behalf, which directly or indirectly was related or affected carrying out housing management functions
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse who are subject to a non-molestation order, an injunction order, an occupation order or a restraining order, which is in force at the date an application is being determined.
- Having an unspent conviction at the date an application is being determined for a serious offence as defined by the Serious Crime Act 2007, Part 1, Schedule 1, committed in the locality of a property against another person or the Local Authority or a Registered Provider.
- Breaching a provision of an injunction under section 1, conviction under section 30, or an order made under section 80 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which occurred in the locality of a specified property or elsewhere which caused nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to a person in the locality or the Local Authority or a Registered Provider, or resulted in access to property that has been prohibited under section 76 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, for a continuous period of more than 48 hours.
- Having an unspent conviction for an offence under section 80(4) or 82(8) Environmental Protection Act 1990, concerning noise from a property which was a statutory nuisance as per section 79(1), Part 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Having an unspent conviction for an offence under the Fraud Act 2006, Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 or Social Housing Fraud Act 2013, involving withholding, falsifying or misrepresenting any information to be allocated social rented housing or sub-letting of social housing by current tenants.
- Within the previous 12-months, having committed any other behaviour that would give grounds for possession under Housing Act 1985, section 84, Schedule 2, Part 1, Grounds 1-7 and section 84A. This includes an applicant being responsible for:
 1. Causing nuisance or annoyance to other; people living, visiting or carrying out lawful activities in the locality of their home, and/or employees of the

Local Authority, or people employed by other organisations, to carry out housing management functions, for the Local Authority

2. Causing an offence, or another adult residing with them, for which they were convicted for, which took place during and at the scene of a riot in the UK.
3. Causing violence or threats of violence towards another person or their family members, who were living at the same property as the applicant, which resulted in them leaving and being unlikely to return to the property.
4. Allowing acts of waste or neglect of their property or common parts of a building in which their property is situated or failing take reasonable steps to stop any person residing with them to cause acts of waste or neglect to the property.
5. Allowing furniture, provided by a landlord for use as part of their tenancy, or for use in common parts, to deteriorate due to ill-treatment, and in a circumstance where a lodger has caused the ill-treatment, not taking reasonable steps to evict that lodger.
6. Being granted a tenancy as a result of deliberately and rashly making a false statement, made by themselves or another person at their prompting.

3.20 The following rules concerning unacceptable behaviour, are not permitted in law and so are proposed to be removed and will not be included within new policy:

- Persons who have been convicted of arson.
- Person who has been previously evicted from a social housing tenancy.
- Persons who been previously abandoned a social housing tenancy.
- Persons whose criminal convictions are not spent being time restricted for a 12-month period.

3.21 Rent or service charge arrears

3.22 Persons who have outstanding liabilities, such as rent or service charge arrears or re-charges, attributable to a tenancy will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This rule prevails in the current policy; however, amendments are proposed to the method used for calculating the amount of outstanding arrears by which it is acceptable to be allocated social rented housing. The current rules require a person to agree to a repayment plan and have maintained repayments for a minimum of 52 weeks or have reduced their debt to below the equivalent of eight weeks gross rent. The new rules still propose a person is required to have a repayment plan, but instead require at least three continuous monthly payments to have been made and be no more than one month behind the agreed schedule of repayments. In future repayment plans will ignore any debts which are statute barred (debts no longer pursuable in law). Deciding what a realistic affordable repayment amount might be, it will be necessary to take account of all income a person receives.

3.23 Following which, from a person's income the deductions will be made:

- Existing expenditure on any current housing costs
- Reasonable living expenses up to the value equal to universal credit standard allowance rates.
- Expenditure necessary to nurture and keep safe any child lives in a household.
- Income spent paying priority debts

3.24 These arrangements have been proposed as they accord with established law and court rulings.

3.25 Breach of tenancy conditions

3.26 Persons who have been evicted for any breach of tenancy conditions (regardless of tenure) will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This rule prevails in the current policy, however some minor amendments are proposed in the proposed new policy to clarify the meaning of the term 'breach of tenancy conditions'. This will now cover:

1. Sub-letting part or whole of the property without permission.
2. Purposely failing to report repairs.
3. Failing to allow contractors to enter the property to carry out maintenance.
4. Running a business from the property without permission from the landlord.
5. Having an unspent conviction for using or allowing their property to be used for illegal or immoral purposes.

3.27 Local connection

3.28 Persons who have not been resident in the local authority area for a minimum of two years will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. A rule in the current policy requires, persons to have a connection of at least six months out of the last 12 months or three years out of the last five years, with some minor exemptions applying in certain specified circumstances. To accord with statutory guidance the minimum period to establish a local connection should be fixed at two years across the scheme area, with applicants only being awarded the highest band for the local authority scheme area they have a local connection to. A person can establish a local connection to the local authority area due to them being resident, having employment, having family associations, or some other special reason. These matters are defined in some detail within the proposed new rules and are contained within the policy contained in Appendix 1, however Member's attention is drawn to the policy having regards and exemptions for local connection criteria for specific circumstances such as those fleeing domestic abuse and armed forces personnel.

3.29 Homeowners

- 3.30 Homeowners will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This is a change to the current policy; it has been proposed to ensure the new rules accord with law and statutory guidance. Some minor exemptions will be put in place, such as for those whose property has been subject to a prohibition order issued by the local authority under the Housing Act 2004, due to the property being a danger to the health of any occupants.

3.31 Savings

- 3.32 Persons who have savings above £16,000 will be disqualified from being allocated social rented housing. This is a change to the current policy; it has been proposed to ensure the new rules accord with law and statutory guidance and therefore the new policy aligns with the rate at which the Department for Work and Pensions fixes its own rules regarding entitlement welfare benefits.

3.33 Exemptions

- 3.34 Persons who are victims of domestic abuse will be exempt from the aforementioned requirements concerning local connection and property ownership.
- 3.35 Persons who have been on active service with the armed forces or reserve forces will have any financial resources gained as a result of an injury or disability, sustained while on active service, disregarded when the matter of savings is considered. Persons who are currently serving in the armed forces or who have done in the preceding five years will all be exempt from local connection requirements. This will also apply to their spouses, bereaved spouses or civil partners of persons who served in the armed forces, and former or serving members of the reserved Armed Forces, plus divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of service personnel, along with adult children of service personnel who could no longer remain in the family home,

3.36 Choice

- 3.37 People will be offered the opportunity to express a preference about the social rented housing that might be allocated to them. This will be done via the online system, by placing bids against a property which is being advertised as available to let or in the case of those agreed applicants and/or vulnerable households via an 'autobid' process. A cap of three bids per week will be in force for each person. Each person will be entitled to make a limited number of refusals when offered a suitable property. This will be capped at one refusal for those in the highest band A, two refusals for those in band B, and three refusals for those in band C. These proposed arrangements make no adjustments to rules set out in the current policy.

3.38 Additional Preference

- 3.39 The law requires that the following persons are given a reasonable preference when social rented housing is being allocated:

- People who are homeless.
- People who are owed a homelessness duty by the local authority.
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including any grounds relating to a disability.
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the area, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to them.

3.40 Local authorities have a power to afford an additional preference (i.e., they can award a higher priority over and above the reasonable preference) on any person they might choose, in line with statutory guidance and local need. The current rules need to be amended to define the categories more explicitly to ensure consistency of assessment and application across the LCR region and how this is being administered. It is proposed that in future the following persons will be afforded an additional preference for an allocation of social housing, and this will be demonstrated by placing all such persons in the highest band of the scheme, Band A:

1. People who are homeless, owed the initial relief duty.
2. People who are homeless, owed the main housing duty, due to being not intentionally homeless and having a priority need for accommodation.
3. People who are victims of domestic abuse
4. People who experience a sudden loss of home due to disaster
5. People who are severely overcrowded, lacking two or more bedrooms
6. People who are under occupying social rented housing by two or more bedrooms
7. People whose medical condition is expected to be terminal and rehousing is required due to the detrimental effects caused by their present accommodation.
8. People whose medical condition is life-threatening, and rehousing is required due to the detrimental effect caused by their present accommodation.
9. People who are ready to be discharged from hospital and there is no accommodation available to them to be discharged to
10. People leaving the care of the Local Authority's children services
11. People approved to be a foster carer or to adopt, who need to move to a larger home, in order to look after a child under the care of the Local Authority's Children Services.
12. Members of the armed and reserve forces, including former members
13. Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the armed forces
14. Victims of racial harassment amounting to violence or threats of violence.
15. Victims of hate crime amounting to violence or threats of violence.
16. Witnesses of crime or victims of crime who would be at risk of intimidation amounted to violence or threats of violence.
17. People who need to be rehoused due to a compulsory purchase order and/or are subject to a local authority approved regeneration scheme
18. People participating in the housing first pilot led by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

3.41 Priority

3.42 The current rules involve six different bands, from A to F however there is some variation which has been identified as part of the review process as to how some local authority areas are prioritising applicants across bandings, the new proposed policy strengthens the consistency by providing more clarity regarding how bandings and priority will be applied, so the proposed new scheme is to move to four bands A-D.,

3.43 Applicants prioritised for an allocation of social rented housing according to:

1. Four Bands, in the order of A to D
2. Where two or more applicants might have the same priority band, then by the date they were accepted into the band they are placed in at the time of an offer being made, with earlier dates taking priority over later dates
3. Where two or more applicants might still have the same priority, then those who are making a community contribution. A community contribution is defined as (i) someone who is in paid or unpaid employment for a minimum of 16 hours per week, for a minimum of six months, (ii) in further or higher education, either part-time or full time, for a minimum of one term, (iii) serving in the regular or reserve armed forces. People who are unable to meet this criteria due to illness, disability, age, gender or other characteristic or circumstance will be afforded the same consideration as those listed above.
4. Where two or more applicants still might have the same priority, then by those who work or have close family in the local authority
5. Meeting landlord advert preference criteria to make best use of stock

3.44 **Band A** will consist of people who have been awarded extra priority for an offer of accommodation, due to having an urgent need to move. This band will consist of all people whom the local authority has chosen to provide an additional preference to as outlined in Sections 3.38-3.40 of this report

3.45 **Band B** will consist of people who are entitled to a priority for an offer of accommodation, due to having a need to move. This band will consist of all people whom the law insists have a reasonable preference. This will include:

- People who are homeless not already included in Band A.
- People who are owed a homelessness duty by the local authority, not already included in Band A, such as those who are intentionally homeless but have a priority need for accommodation, all those who are threatened with homelessness.
- People who are occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 3 (in relation to unhealthy premises), Housing Act 1985, Part 10 (relating to overcrowding) and the Housing act 2004, part one (relating to hazardous housing) will be taken account of by the local authority when determining an applicant's housing conditions.
- People needing to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability, due to detrimental effects caused by present

accommodation, either due to the location of the present accommodation and/or due to the physical conditions of that accommodation. A health or social care professional with a direct knowledge of a person's condition will be contacted by the local authority for an opinion of the person's health and the impact on their housing needs. The local authority will consider whether an applicant's needs could be met by providing aids and adaptations to the current home, to enable them to remain in their present accommodation. Once accommodation is allocated to a person with medical or welfare needs, their support and care needs will be assessed jointly by social care services, housing support providers, NHS trusts, and other relevant agencies if appropriate.

- People needing to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet this need would cause hardship to themselves or others.

3.46 **Band C** will consist of all other applicants who do not have a priority to move, due to them wanting to move rather than having any need to move, as a result of which they will not have been afforded an additional preference nor will they be entitled to a reasonable preference.

3.47 **Band D** will consist of applicants from band A or B or C who have exhausted the right to refuse an allocation of social rented housing or have failed to bid on more than three occasions where a suitable property would have been available. Applicants will remain in band D for a period of 12 months.

3.48 Implementing the new policy and the new IT System to support this will require all existing applicants on the register to be reassessed against the new policy. Some existing applicants may not qualify under the new rules and some may be reassessed into new priority bandings. This however is consistent and can occur under the current policy as part of the review of applications that are undertaken or when an applicant has a material change of circumstances. The process for how reassessments will be undertaken of existing applicants and how this will be communicated to them, will form part of the implementation plans as this will be heavily dependent upon the procurement process and the functionality of the new IT system. Members however should note for those who qualify, in the main the following will apply - applicants in the current Band A will primarily remain in the new proposed band A. Applicants in the current band B and C would primarily be placed in the new proposed band B. Applicants in the current band D and E would primarily be placed in the new proposed Band C. Applicants in the current Band F would be placed in the proposed new band D. In future it is proposed that all bandings and prioritisation of people within them will be consistently applied across all local authorities.

3.49 **Other matters**

3.50 A range of minor amendments are being made to the information people are provided, how applications are handled, how decisions are made, and how reviews are carried out to ensure that this provides greater clarity, greater information and is in line with statutory guidance.

- 3.51 Other amendments that are being made include matters relating to local lettings schemes, avoiding discrimination and enhancing equality of opportunity, ensuring the best interest of children when allocations are made, the way discretion is applied to individual cases, the way any future changes about the rules will be publicised, how direct flights will be administered, how people can make applications to housing associations, details of nominations agreements and specific matters relating to transfer tenants.
- 3.52 Matters relating to the contracting out of the administration of housing allocation functions are outside the scope of the proposed new rules.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional revenue implications arising from the proposals in this report.
- 4.2 There will be an upfront capital cost in relation to the purchase of a new IT system and an associated £70,000 capital budget has been approved previously, under delegated authority on 23rd October 2020, and forms part of the capital programme. All Scheme Member local authorities have already committed financially and operationally to the procurement exercise in respect of the IT system, which is required irrespective of the new policy being implemented given that the current contract is due to expire shortly.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must adhere to the law regarding the allocation of Social Rented Housing, as set out in the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 Allocation of Housing Accommodation.
- 5.2 The proposed policy has been tested for compliance with legislation by external counsel, specifically around aspects such as prioritisation, additional/reasonable preference, eligibility, qualification and local connection. The advice given has been reflected in the final version of the policy to ensure that the new policy is fit for purpose.
- 5.3 The award of contract will be made on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) scoring. The meaning of MEAT is currently governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015. As criteria for the assessment of tenders on the basis of the best price-quality ratio, MEAT will always predominantly contain a cost or quality element, but the MEAT criteria may also include assessment on the basis of various other criteria linked to the subject-matter of the contract in question, including lifecycle costing and environmental or social aspects. For example, particular award criteria may take into account the inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, local wealth building, training and educational aspects or the use of non-toxic substances in the production process to deliver the requirement. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) set out how contracts are to be awarded by the Council, which will include reference to the Council's Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy.

- 5.4 Should the authorised officer wish to award the contract via a tender which does not hold the highest MEAT score or where the costs of the award will exceed the relevant budget, the matter will be referred back to this Committee for consideration.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There is the need to procure a new IT system to support the operation of a new allocations scheme.
- 6.2 Arising from this, there may be further short-term staffing implications in order to facilitate the migration of data and subsequent system testing associated with the implementation of the new system. The system testing will be shared across the LCR partnership, and any pressures will be managed within the Housing Division's existing budget provision.
- 6.3 In respect of the recruitment of a Sub-regional Co-ordinator post, which has been previously approved under delegated authority, Members are asked to support the recruitment of this post to Wirral Council, which will be funded jointly between the five participating LA areas, but whose workplan will be managed jointly through the PPP Contract Board.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Local Authority has a public law duty to accept applications from any member of the public, for an allocation of social rented housing. Failure to operate such an allocation system will mean the Council is in breach of this duty.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A formal public consultation has been conducted, as required in law. The nature and form of this consultation was approved under delegated authority of the Director of Regeneration & Place and was shared with members prior to consultation.
- 8.2 Consultation on the amended scheme rules also took place with Registered Providers during 2020, the feedback for which has informed the final version of the policy.
- 8.3 The consultation was open to any member of the public, asking a number of questions in a set survey questionnaire, including an easy read version of the survey. These questions were accessed via a Survey Monkey link from the Property Pool Plus website and each Local Authorities respective websites. The draft Allocations Policy scheme was provided for reference. The consultation and survey were aimed at as many residents within the borough of Wirral as possible and specifically those residents currently on the Housing Register for social housing with Property Pool Plus, Participating Registered Social Landlords, other referring agencies, and other key public sector agencies. The Consultation period ran from the 18th November 2020 to the 10th February 2021 and a summary of which can be found in **Appendix 2**.

- 8.4 A total of 4,344 individuals responded to the consultation, along with 4 organisations. 36% of all respondents were from Liverpool, which is reflective of City residents equating to one-third of the population of the Liverpool City Region, with respondents from the Wirral area representing the second largest at 22.6% which is positive and welcomed

	Halton	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	Total
Individual	433	657	1,593	718	993	4,394
on behalf of an organisation	0	1	2	1	0	4
Grand Total	433	658	1,595	719	993	4,398

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment regarding the proposed new policy has been undertaken, and can be found at the following link: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct climate emergency implications arising directly from the allocations policy however standards within the social sector are regulated with clear targets set as part of the decarbonisation agenda, thereby offering people who need it a better quality and standard of homes within a regulated market.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Many vulnerable people rely on accessing social housing for a home to live in and providing access to a stable home supports community wealth building in providing sustainable and resilient communities. The opportunity to have a settled affordable accommodation also offers stability for employment and enables people to thrive, particularly those with vulnerabilities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Proposed Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy.

Appendix 2: Summary of Consultation Responses

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Officer Decision Notice - Proposed amendments to Property Pool Plus Housing Allocations Policy and Procedure for consultation

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50070682/ODN%20PPP%20Notice.docx.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date