

Proposed Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

	Proposed Change	What we do now	What we're proposing	Rationale for changes and the potential impact
1.	Removal of existing Band 5 applicants from the Housing Register	<p>Since 1st May 2014, no new applications are accepted from those with no identified housing need or those who are considered to be adequately housed.</p> <p>As at 1st April 2016 there were 2597 households that remain on the Housing Register in Band 5 whose application dates precede 1st May 2014.</p>	<p>To remove all households in Band 5</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept new applicants with no housing need.</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants in Band 5 advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 2597 households from the Housing Register. It would also remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This will make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>This will also make it easier to manage customer expectations as only people with an identified need to move will qualify to appear.</p> <p>Band 5 applicants are increasingly frustrated as there is little chance of them receiving an offer.</p> <p>Maintaining Band 5 applicants places an administrative burden on the service as applications have to be continued to be processed from people who are considered to be suitably housed.</p> <p>Removal of Band 5 applicants will reduce the administrative burden on the service and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.</p> <p>There will be some financial savings as these applications will no longer</p>

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				need to be processed and annual review letters sent.
2.	Removal of Band 4 applicants from the Housing Register	<p>Any applicant who is eligible to join the Housing Register and meets any of the following criteria will be placed in Band 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ People who share facilities with other households but have their own bedroom □ People who need to move to, or remain in, a particular area of Leicester to give or receive emotional support from family, friends or others in the community □ People over the age of 50 years requesting 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation only <p>As at 1st April 2016 there were 2191 households in Band 4.</p>	<p>To remove all households in Band 4 except those who are requesting sheltered housing as they will be given increased Band 3 priority.</p> <p>This will mean the Housing Register will just have 3 bands with circa 6766 households (see Appendix 4).</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Written notification to all applicants in Band 4 advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p> <p>Existing Band 4 applicants (405) requesting 1 bed sheltered housing will be moved to Band 3 as sheltered housing is readily available.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 1786 households from the Housing Register.</p> <p>Band 4 applicants have very little chance of receiving an offer other than sheltered housing. There were 40 lettings of sheltered housing to Band 4 applicants.</p> <p>Removal of Band 4 applicants will reduce the administrative burden on the service and means resources can be more effectively utilised to assist those with a genuine need to move.</p> <p>There will be some financial savings as these applications will no longer need to be processed and annual review letters sent.</p>
3.	Removal of existing owner occupiers from the Housing Register	<p>Since 10th August 2015 owner occupiers no longer qualify to join the Housing Register unless there are extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>There are currently 287 households that remain on the Housing Register who are owner occupiers whose application date precedes 10th August 2015.</p>	<p>To review all owner occupiers on the Housing Register and remove those who do not have any exceptional circumstances to remain.</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept owner occupiers onto the Housing Register.</p>	<p>The change would remove circa 287 owner-occupiers from the Housing Register.</p> <p>The change would also remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This would make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>There would also be equality in the transparency of the policy that all</p>

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			<p>How?</p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants who are owner occupiers advising of their removal from the Housing Register with a right of appeal.</p>	<p>owner occupiers are treated the same.</p> <p>As at 01/04/2016 the number of owner occupiers on the Housing Register:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BAND 1</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BAND 2</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BAND 3</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BAND 4</td> <td>71</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BAND 5</td> <td>145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>287</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Total	BAND 1	16	BAND 2	32	BAND 3	23	BAND 4	71	BAND 5	145	Grand Total	287
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4.	Removal of applicants with sufficient financial resources to secure alternative accommodation from the Housing Register	Since 10th August 2015 households with a total income of £25k per year (single household) or £40k per year (joint households) or capital assets of over £50k are not allowed to join the Housing Register.	<p>To extend the rules to those with sufficient financial resources whose application date preceded 10th August 2015.</p> <p>This would not require further external consultation as this was done when the decision was taken to not accept people who had the financial resources to secure alternative accommodation onto the Housing Register.</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Written notification to all remaining applicants after review, advising there is now a threshold for earnings and savings and financial checks will</p>	<p>The change would remove the complexity of rules that are different due to the date the applicant applied. This would make the policy more easily understood.</p> <p>There would also be equality in the transparency of the policy that all applicants are treated the same.</p> <p>Removing existing applicants who exceed the financial thresholds may also help to reduce the number of council properties purchased under the Right to Buy scheme.</p> <p>Current rules allow any public sector tenant who has been a tenant for 3 or more years at any point to qualify to buy the home they currently live in</p>														

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			be undertaken at point of offer.	if it is eligible for Right to Buy. Qualifying tenants can currently get a 35% discount up to a maximum of 70% or £77,900 for a house.
5.	To limit the qualifying income threshold to join the Housing Register to the level set under the 'pay to stay' limit in the Housing and Planning Act 2016	Currently households who have an income of £40k per year or more do not qualify to join the Housing Register.	To reduce the income threshold to join the Housing Register to the level set under the 'pay to stay' limit in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, which is currently £31k per year. Only taxable income (i.e. income received for work or through investments) will count towards the £31k per year threshold and does not include any benefits that applicants may receive. How? Checks will be made at the point of registration to the Housing Register and at the offer stage to ensure households are within the income threshold.	This would mean any household with a taxable income of £31k per year or more will not qualify to join the Housing Register. The income threshold will increase annually in line with Consumer Price Inflation. 'Pay to stay' means higher income households will be required to pay higher local authority rents than lower income families.
6.	Reconfiguration of the overcrowding banding priorities	Currently there are 3 different priorities given to people who are living in overcrowded conditions. 1. Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded for those who are lacking 2 or more bedrooms. This also	Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' is awarded to all tenants who are lacking 2 or more bedrooms or they are assessed as being statutory overcrowded. Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to	The removal of non-tenants will result in the number of households with Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' priority reducing from 798 households to 444 households. This better reflects the overcrowding position of tenants in the city.

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		<p>includes people who are statutory overcrowded.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Band 2 'Families Living in 1 Bed Accommodation' is awarded to families living in 1 bed accommodation with their children who need an additional bedroom. 3. Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to those who are lacking 1 bedroom. 	<p>families living in 1 bedroom accommodation with children 3 years and over.</p> <p>Band 3 'Overcrowding' is awarded to tenants who need 1 additional bedroom e.g. a family living in 2 bedroom accommodation needing 3 bedroom accommodation.</p> <p>How? Any household identified on the Housing Register as being overcrowded will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	
7.	<p>Addition of a new banding priority to non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use</p>	<p>People who are non-tenants i.e. lodgers or living with friends or family are treated the same as tenants when assessing overcrowding.</p> <p>No checks are undertaken to verify or confirm the position of non-tenants joining the Housing Register and receiving this high priority.</p>	<p>Creation of a new Band 3 priority for people who are non-tenants who are living with others and do not have sufficient bedrooms for their own use.</p> <p>How? Any applicant who is not a tenant and does not have exclusive use of bedrooms for their household will be placed in this band.</p> <p>Existing applicants who are non-tenants will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	<p>This would currently impact on 354 households who are non-tenants and awarded Band 2 'Severe Overcrowding' priority. They would be re-assessed to the new Band 3 priority.</p> <p>Non-tenants who have been given notice to leave or assessed as living in insecure accommodation will be considered for Band 2 'Insecure Accommodation' priority.</p> <p>Statutory homeless households will be re-housed in the private sector unless they fall in one of the exceptions in this category.</p>

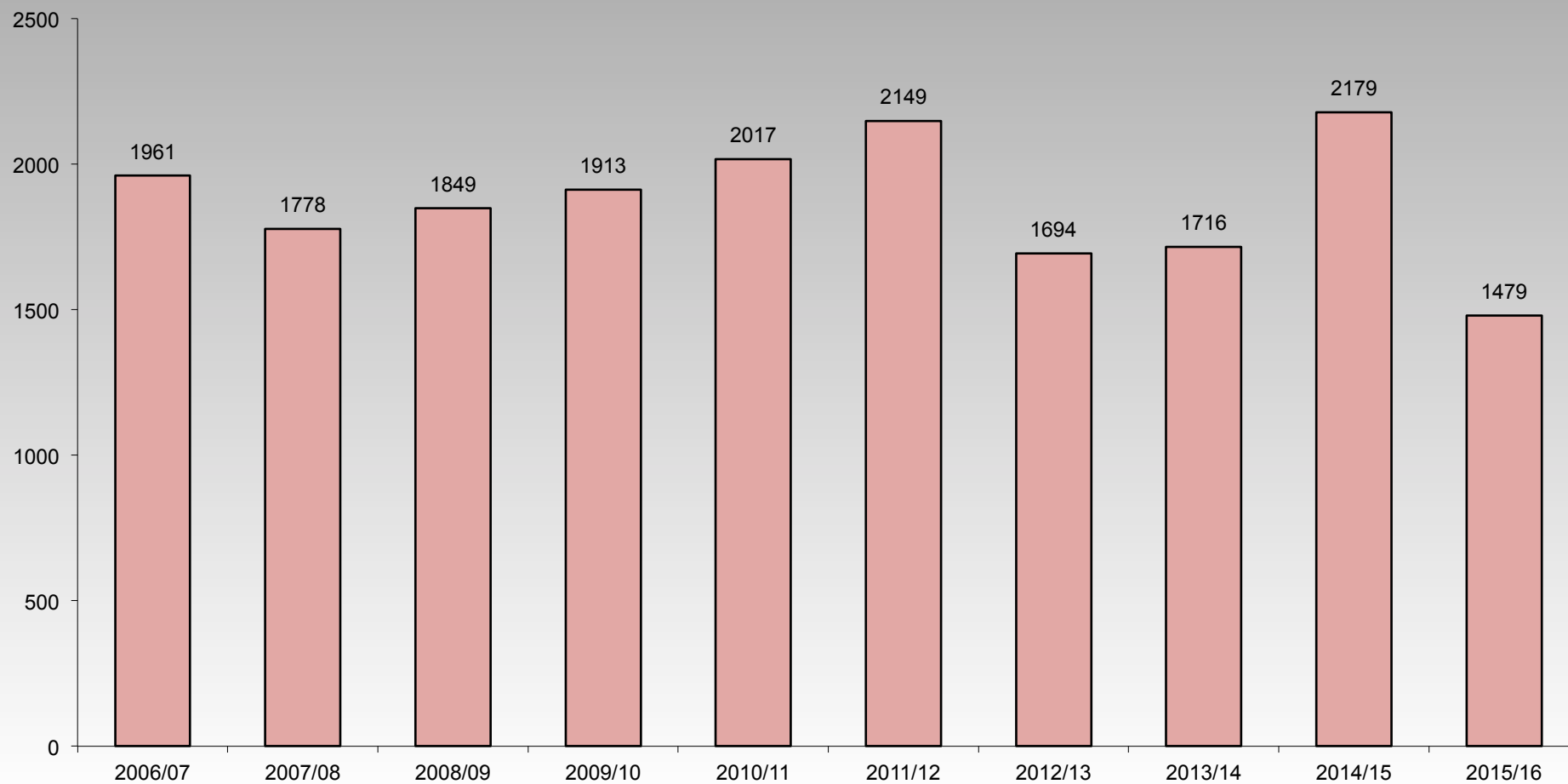
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8.	Reconfiguration of the under-occupation banding priorities	<p>Currently there are 3 different priorities given to social tenants who are under-occupying their homes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation' is given to those social tenants who are giving up 3 bed accommodation to move to 1 bed accommodation and those giving up 2 bed accommodation to move to 1 bed accommodation. 2. Band 1 'Tenants Incentive Scheme' is given to those social tenants giving up a large home with 4 or more bedrooms and moving to a home with 3 or fewer bedrooms. 3. Band 2 'Under-occupation' is given to those social tenants giving up 3 bed accommodation to move to 2 bed accommodation. 	<p>To only have one Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation' category which is given to under-occupying social tenants who are giving up 2 or more bedrooms, those moving to 1 bed accommodation or any other social tenant who is affected by the bedroom tax following assessment.</p> <p>Band 2 is for under-occupying social tenants who do not meet the qualifying criteria for Band 1 'Priority Under-occupation'.</p> <p>How? Any social tenant identified on the Housing Register as under-occupying will be re-assessed under the new rules and where there is any change to their priority they will be notified in writing.</p>	<p>This will make the policy on under-occupation clearer by only having one Band 1 priority as opposed to two Band 1 priorities.</p>
9.	Addition of a new banding priority to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing	<p>Reasonable preference is currently given for this statutory requirement within a number of different priority bandings which includes statutory homelessness, management and access and health priorities.</p>	<p>Creation of a new Band 2 priority for people who are living in insanitary or unreasonable housing for example applicant does not have access to a bathroom or kitchen, or an inside toilet, or access to hot and cold water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating as confirmed by</p>	<p>There is a statutory requirement to give reasonable preference within the allocations scheme to people who are living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing.</p> <p>This will remove incentives to apply as homeless and acknowledge the</p>

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			<p>Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Environmental Health Officer will provide a written report to Housing Options Service confirming that a person's current accommodation is considered to be insanitary or unsatisfactory housing.</p>	<p>reasonable preference groups.</p>
10.	<p>To adopt the Government's Bedroom Standard which will mean persons of the same sex sharing a bedroom up to the age of 20 years</p>	<p>Currently the bedroom rules as used by Housing Benefit to determine how many bedrooms a household is eligible for has been adopted.</p> <p>A separate bedroom is allocated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent <input type="checkbox"/> Any other person aged 16 years or more <input type="checkbox"/> Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> Each pair of people of the same sex aged under 21 years. <input type="checkbox"/> Any person who cannot be paired 	<p>We adopt the current Bedroom Standard as set out in the Housing Act 1985. This means two persons of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 20 years.</p> <p>A separate bedroom is allocated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent <input type="checkbox"/> Any other person aged 21 years or more <input type="checkbox"/> Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> Each pair of people of the same sex aged under 21 years. <input type="checkbox"/> Any person who cannot be paired <p>How?</p> <p>Any family identified on the Housing Register with children 16 years and over will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in</p>	<p>Under the current bedroom eligibility criteria any person aged 16 years or more is allocated a separate bedroom.</p> <p>This has resulted in families with older children eligible for larger size accommodation, for example, a family with 4 children (2 daughters ages 12, 16 and 2 sons ages 14, 18) would currently be eligible for 5 bedroom accommodation.</p> <p>Given the shortage of large properties, families do not always want to be considered for large properties.</p> <p>They often want to be considered for a property with fewer bedrooms than they are eligible for in order to give themselves a better chance of securing an offer of accommodation.</p> <p>Many local authorities (see Appendix</p>

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			writing.	5) have adopted the Government Bedroom Standard when determining bedroom eligibility. We will continue to allocate additional bedrooms where there is a health need or where there is a fostering arrangement in place by Leicester City Council.
11.	To enable applicants more choice of accommodation options on the Housing Register, households will be able to choose to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are eligible for.	Households are able to apply for accommodation up to two bedrooms less than they are eligible for, providing it does not create statutory overcrowding. Families with children also cannot apply for one bedroom accommodation.	Due to increasing need and managing customer expectations households are able to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are eligible for to prevent severe overcrowding. How? Any household identified on the Housing Register who is able to apply for one less bedroom will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in writing.	Current and proposed changes to the bedroom rules seek to maximise occupancy. Allowing families the opportunity to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom than they are currently eligible for, gives them a better chance to secure an offer of accommodation The proposed change seeks to minimise overcrowding whilst still giving families an element of choice. There will be however still be occasions where households will not be able to apply for accommodation with one less bedroom, for example, where a family have been awarded overcrowding priority as this would result in moving to like for like accommodation.
12.	To enable applicants more choice of accommodation options on the Housing Register and to reduce the pressure on the demand for 2	Families with children are not able to apply for one bedroom accommodation.	Families with 1 child aged 2 years and under are able to choose to apply for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation.	It is not unreasonable for families with 1 child under 3 years to resolve their immediate housing predicament to move to 1 bedroom

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	<p>bedroom accommodation, families with 1 child aged 2 years and under will be able to choose to apply for one bedroom accommodation</p>		<p>How? Any household identified on the Housing Register who is able to downsize will have their bedroom eligibility adjusted and notified in writing.</p>	<p>accommodation to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>This may enable them to secure accommodation quicker as there were 472 lettings of 1 bedroom flats in 2015-16. This accounted for 32% of all lettings.</p> <p>The change would allow circa 928 families with 1 child under 3 years the choice to apply for one bedroom accommodation</p>

Lettings from the Housing Register 2006 - 2016



1991	1778	1849	1913	2017	2149	1694	1716	2179	1479
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