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**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 28 MAY 2019**

**SUBJECT: ALLOCATIONS POLICY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
2018/19**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the Council's Allocations Policy during 2018/19.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the allocation and letting of housing.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-**

- i) considers and notes the performance identified within the report; and**
- ii) agrees the allocations quotas for 2019/20 detailed at Paragraph 5.4 of this report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This Committee has considered performance monitoring information on the operation of its Housing Allocation Policy annually since 2005. The most recent report was presented to this Committee on 26 June 2018 (paragraph 7 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 This Committee approved Moray's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2019-2024 on 2 April 2019 (paragraph 6 of the draft minute refers). The LHS sets out the Council's approach to addressing housing need and homelessness, property condition and fuel poverty. The operation of the Allocations Policy is a key factor in the delivery of LHS outcomes.
- 3.3 This Committee approved a revised Allocations Policy on 5 February 2019 (paragraph 9 of the minute refers) for implementation on 1 May 2019.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF HOUSING LIST ALLOCATION AND DEMAND TRENDS**

- 4.1 Statistical information on the operation of the policy is presented in **APPENDIX I** and shows:
- 4.2 **Table 1** provides details of the housing list for the last 5 years. This shows that the total number of households on the Homeless List has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years, but there has been a significant reduction in the Waiting List total and an increase in the Transfer List. The upward trend in Transfer List applications is most likely due to the new build housing programme with its emphasis on accessible housing and larger family accommodation.
- 4.3 **Table 2** details the size and type of housing required by applicants on the housing list. Over the past 5 years, there have been significant increases in demand for amenity/accessible housing. This is consistent with the projected demographic changes in Moray and the ageing population. Demand for sheltered housing has remained almost unchanged despite demographic changes.
- 4.4 **Table 3** provides summarised information on the 1st area preferences of current housing list applicants. It shows that area preferences are broadly in proportion to the number of dwellings (all tenures) in each Housing Market Area.
- 4.5 Applicants who apply for housing are able to state where they want to live. This allows them the choice of any, or all, of the 63 lettings areas across Moray. Often these choices are driven by urgency and availability, rather than a desire to live in a particular area. To support the overall strategic process, applicants are asked separately to state their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> areas of preference (i.e. where they would ideally choose to live). This 2<sup>nd</sup> strategic question is the source used to inform the Council's approach to delivery of new affordable housing across geographical areas, and is reflected in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).
- 4.6 **Table 4** provides details of the number of re-lets from Council stock in 2018/19. When this is compared to the housing list as at 31 March 2019, it shows that there were 8 applicants on the list per re-let (8:1) during 2018/19. However this pressure varies greatly across house types and sizes:
- 1 bed general needs (34:1);
  - 2 bed general needs (5:1); and
  - 4 bed (22:1).
- 4.7 The table also shows that there is no evidence of significant migration between Housing Market Areas.
- 4.8 **Table 5** shows that there has been a general downward trend in relets, but this has stabilised over the last 3 years. Reducing numbers of vacancies could compromise the Council's ability to successfully delivery its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

## **5. ALLOCATIONS QUOTAS FOR THE HOUSING LIST**

- 5.1 The housing list consists of three separate lists (waiting, transfer and homelessness). The Homeless List includes those who have been assessed as statutorily homeless, the Waiting List consists of applicants who are waiting for a council house, and includes current Registered Social Landlords (RSL) tenants; and the Transfer List of those who are current Council tenants and who need or want to move. The ratio of allocations to be made to each list is determined annually by the Communities Committee.
- 5.2 **Table 6** shows the proportion of allocations made to applicants from the 3 housing lists, over the last 5 years. The quota of allocations to the Homeless List has been 40% (+/-5%) for many years. This quota was exceeded in 2016/17 and 2017/18, but was achieved during 2018/19. The Head of Housing and Property approved the higher quotas for homeless households in an effort to reduce pressures on temporary accommodation and to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.3 In December 2018, this Committee considered the first iteration of its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which aims to minimise the use of temporary accommodation and provide permanent housing options to homeless households as quickly as possible (Paragraph 6 of the Minute refers). The Homeless List quota proposed below is intended to strike an appropriate balance between the need to implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and the need to minimise any unintended consequences of increased quota, i.e. that the Homeless List would significantly increase as this would be seen by many applicants as the quickest route into permanent housing. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which includes an Equality Impact Assessment, is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.
- 5.4 Historically this Committee has taken a pragmatic view and agreed quotas intended to strike an acceptable balance between all three applicant groups. The following quotas proposed for 2019/20 are:

<b>List</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>
Homeless List	50%	+/-5%
Waiting List	32%	+/-5%
Transfer List	18%	+/-5%

## **6. NEW BUILD LETTINGS PLAN**

- 6.1 The new build lettings plan was introduced in 2015. The Plan sets out how the Council will deviate from the Allocations Policy in identifying the first tenant in new build houses, with the aim of establishing successful, sustainable new communities, and this includes deviation from Housing List quotas. **Table 7** shows there were 68 Council new build completions during 2018/19. **Table 8** shows the proportions of allocations from each List, and that 32% of new lets were allocated to Transfer List applicants.

## **7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

Moray 2027 and the Service Plan identify the need to address the shortage of affordable housing and tackle homelessness. The Allocations Policy seeks to make the best use of the Council's housing stock and promote healthier citizens and more people living well in their communities.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 amends the 1987 Act and requires councils to provide a minimum of temporary accommodation, advice and assistance to all applicants assessed as homeless, regardless of whether they have been assessed as being in priority need. From 31 December 2012 the priority need test for homeless households was abolished, and as a result, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out standards against which the Scottish Housing Regulator will assess local authorities as part of its inspection regime.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**(d) Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no impacts in relation to equal opportunities or the socio-economic duty as the purpose of the report is to inform Committee on performance.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Acting Head of Housing and Property, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services Manager, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), Equal Opportunities Officer, Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts) and Tracey Sutherland (Committee Services Officer). Any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1 This report presents the annual review of the operation of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. It also presents proposed allocations quotas for 2019/20. The quotas proposed are intended to complement implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.**

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