



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 27 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: ALLOCATIONS POLICY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the Council's Allocations Policy during 2022/23.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of Section III G (11) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the preparation and implementation of strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - i. considers and notes the performance identified within the report; and
 - ii. agrees the allocations quotas for 2023/24 detailed at Paragraph 5.5 of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Communities Committee approved a revised Allocations Policy on 5 February 2019 (Paragraph 9 of the Minute refers) for implementation on 1 May 2019.
- 3.2 The Communities Committee approved Moray's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2019-2024 on 2 April 2019 (Paragraph 6 of the 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 The Communities Committee has considered performance monitoring information on the operation of its Housing Allocations Policy annually since 2005. The most recent report was presented to this Committee on 21 June 2022 (Paragraph 9 of the Minute refers).

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

4.1 Statistical information on the operation of the policy is presented in **APPENDIX I**. The statistics for 2020/21 and 2021/22 should be viewed in the context of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions in activity:

4.2 **Table 1** provides details of the housing list for the last 5 years. This shows that the Transfer List remains relatively stable, the Waiting list has been reducing slightly over 5 years, but that the Homeless list has increased by 17% between March 2022 and March 2023.

4.3 Housing List trends are being considered in depth as part of the development of Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and forthcoming Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2024-2029, and will be reflected in the revised Allocations Policy currently in development.

4.4 **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 larger 4+bed family sized housing and in amenity/accessible housing, with corresponding reductions in demand for 2 and 3 bed general needs housing.

4.5 The increased demand for accessible housing is consistent with the projected demographic changes in Moray and the ageing population. Demand for sheltered housing has remained almost unchanged despite demographic changes.

4.6 Approaches to increasing supply of affordable housing detailed in the Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan are aligned to these changes in demand.

4.7 **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.

4.8 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 62 lettings areas across Moray. These choices can be driven by urgency and availability, rather than a desire to live in a particular area. To support strategic planning for affordable housing, applicants are asked separately to state their 1st, 2nd and 3rd areas of preference (i.e. where they would ideally choose to live). This second, 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).

4.9 **Table 4** provides details of the number of re-lets from Council stock in 2022/23. When this is compared to the housing list as at 31 March 2023, it shows that there were 6.5 applicants on the list per re-let (6:1) during 2022/23. However this pressure varies greatly across house types and sizes:

- 1 bed general needs (63:1);
- 2 bed general needs (5:1);
- 3 bed general needs (8:1); and
- 4 bed (32:1).

4.10 The table also shows that there is no evidence of significant migration between Housing Market Areas (HMA).

4.11 **Table 5** shows that, there is an increasing trend in re-let rates, as intended, with the introduction of the revised Allocations Policy in May 2019. Increasing the numbers of vacancies from existing stock will assist the Council to successfully deliver the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Although the number of relets had reduced in 2020/21, this can be attributed to the COVID19 restrictions on house-moves in all tenures for part of 2020.

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 RSL tenants; and the Transfer List of those who are current Council tenants and who need or want to move. The proportion of allocations to be made to each list is determined annually by Committee.

5.2 Following the cessation of the Grampian wide common housing register Apply4Homes, the Council's online housing application form was implemented on 29 April 2021. The implementation process required all housing list applicants to reregister on the new system. This process has resulted in a reduction in the number of applications from households with no connection to Moray. Although the totals presented in Table 1 have reduced, there is no significant change in the number of households who do have a local connection to Moray, i.e. those who would be most likely to receive an offer of housing.

5.3 **Table 6** shows the proportion of allocations made to applicants from the 3 housing lists, over the last 5 years.

5.4 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan aims to minimise the use of temporary accommodation and provide permanent housing options to homeless households as quickly as possible. 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 be seen by applicants as the quickest route into permanent housing, and would significantly increase as a result.

- 5.5 Historically this Committee has taken a pragmatic view and agreed quotas intended to strike an acceptable balance between all lists. The quotas proposed for 2023/24 have been modified slightly to reflect the reduction in the Waiting List and increase in the Transfer list (see **APPENDIX I**, Table 1). An increase in the Transfer List quota will generate more availability of housing and so assist the Council to deliver the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The quotas are illustrated in the table below:

List	Target (existing)	Target (alternative)	Tolerance
Homeless List	50%	50%	+/-5%
Waiting List	32%	30%	+/-5%
Transfer List	18%	20%	+/-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 properties, with the aim of establishing successful, sustainable new communities, and this includes deviation from Housing List quotas.
- 6.2 **Table 7** shows there were 8 Council new lets during 2022/23. Acquisitions completed shortly before year end were not let by 31 March 2023.
- 6.3 **Table 8** shows the proportions of allocations from each List, and that 47% 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 primary legislation governing allocations of Council housing is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. This legislation provides the Council with the discretion to develop allocation and local letting policies in line with local priorities.

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) Climate change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change and biodiversity implications arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Housing and Property, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer, Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), and Lindsey Robinson (Committee Services Officer).

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 2023/24. The quotas proposed are intended to complement implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

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Background Papers: with author

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