

THURSDAY, 24 JANUARY 2019

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING SERVICES AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS****DRAFT ALLOCATIONS POLICY 2018 - 2020****EXEMPT INFORMATION****PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to

- Detail the proposed changes to the Councils Allocations Policy subject to the statutory consultation process
- Set out the arrangements for statutory consultation on the proposed changes set to take place between 7<sup>th</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- Confirm the timescales and arrangements for transitioning to the new Policy
- Set out the community based impact assessment which will remain under review and presented as part of the final policy document, highlighted within the report

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet are recommended to:-

1. **Approve, in principle, the draft allocations policy, shown at Annex 1-3, subject to the requisite consultation arrangements**
2. **Approve the consultation plan detailed within the report commencing 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and running until Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019.**
3. **Delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services & Neighbourhoods & Executive Director of Communities to approve the final policy for Full Council approval October 2019, save any material changes which would be referred back to Cabinet and the timescales amended accordingly**
4. **Support comments arising from discussions with the Councils Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny on the proposed matters relating to the management of the Councils Housing Register – presentation attached at Annex 4. Noting further detailed Scrutiny forms part of the consultation plan detailed in the report.**
5. **Note the independent Report, shown at Annex 6, provided by the Housing Quality Network (HQN) highlighting the exemplary approach to the Councils review of its Allocations Policy.**
6. **Approve the draft community & equality based impact assessment noting the effect of the key changes on existing and potential service users**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Localism Act, 2011, provides considerable freedoms for Councils in designing and implementing allocations and lettings policies. In refreshing its approach to the management of the Housing Register, the Council has a dual responsibility to not only comply with its strategic housing aims as well as ensure compliance with tenancy standard regulations, monitored by the Social Housing Regulator, given its landlord obligations around the management of its own stock.

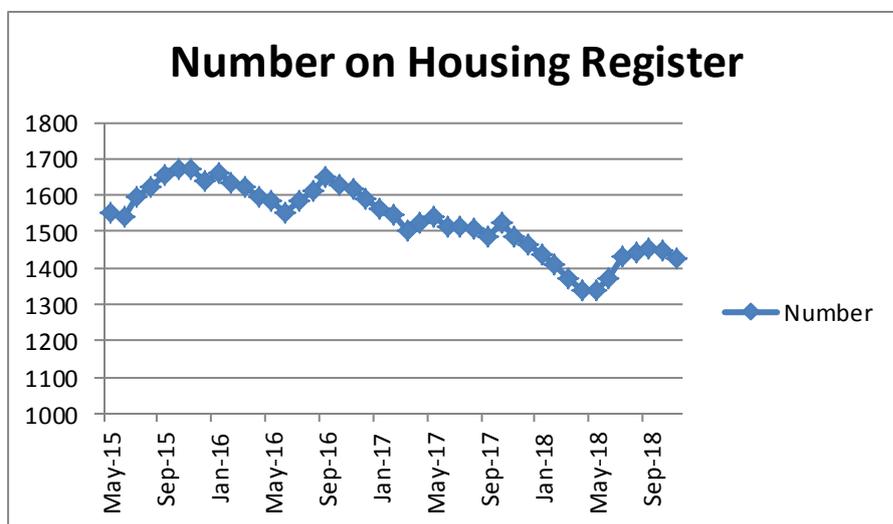
The MHCLG is currently analysing feedback from consultation conducted over the Summer (August – November 2018) on its new Social Housing Green Paper, 'A new deal for social housing', and further announcements are expected in the new calendar year. Whilst there was little mention of allocations and lettings it is expected that there will be a significant evidence collection exercise, led by the government, on developing the national understanding of how the allocations system operates across the County. The focus of this will be to understand how Councils use their flexibilities; the relationships between Councils and registered providers of housing around nominations; as well as the effectiveness of choice based letting schemes. It is therefore likely that the recommendations to Cabinet will require further review and this has been built into the communications timetable detailed in the report, likely into 2020.

Nationally, according to the Housing Quality Network (HQN), as of April 2018, there were 1.16million households on Councils registers. This compares with 1.85million in April 2012. This is primarily the result of the Localism Act 2011 enabling local residency qualifications to be adopted and Councils being better prepared to manage demand.

Tamworth, through its continued and robust approach to the management of its housing register has also seen a reduction in numbers on the register, as evidenced from the numbers below.

<b>Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>Households on the Housing Register</b>
<b>2012</b>	2104
<b>2013</b>	1783
<b>2014</b>	1727
<b>2015</b>	1625
<b>2016</b>	1598
<b>2017</b>	1500
<b>2018</b>	1337

This is not surprising as the Council continues to prioritise its work around allocations and homeless prevention – the management of the housing register forming part of the intelligence around mapping demand, in line with the Tamworth communities offer.



Clearly the Councils ambition, through its local plan and strategic priorities, is to invest in more new and affordable housing. The management of the housing register and understanding of housing need directly contributes to this, although it is just one of the tools in managing the housing based challenges around supply and demand.

Effective management of the housing register is fundamental to understanding housing need. The legal framework detailed in the report is complex and is often a highly litigious area and can lead to judicial review with regard to its decisions. Therefore the proposals before Cabinet have been independently tested by HQN and have also been subject to a detailed community based equality impact assessment. Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny have also considered the proposals and welcome the opportunity to host a workshop to go through the detail during the consultation phases.

Cabinet are therefore being asked to approve the draft documents for statutory consultation only. Subject to this detailed process and save any material changes (as a result of the consultation or as a result of legal and/or government regulation changing) then it is recommended authority is delegated to the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with the Executive Director of Communities to approve the final policy document.

The details of the consultation methodology and timeline are shown below

Consultee	Details and Methodology
Existing applicants on the housing register	Letter with FAQ, summary of changes and indicative banding
Tenant Consultative Group	Workshop with HQN
Registered Providers with nomination potential (and those with formal agreements)	Copies of Correspondence with on-line survey for feedback as well as telephone update
Third sector Partners on the electronic directory	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet
SCC Adult Social Care and Childrens Services	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet
Health Sector and CCGs regarding medical priorities (including retained GP	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet

advice)	
Tamworth's Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	February Workshop (2019) as requested October 2018
Focus Group involving potential applicants from the current housing application pool	Officer led workshops with combination of tenants' on the active database and residents from 'Tamworth Listens'
Portfolio Holder & Cabinet	Detailed discussions based on community impact and localised modelling as feedback is used to inform further development of the policy

The legal and best practice position is detailed later in the report, based on delivering that timescales are proposed below; noting this is of course subject to change should there be a legitimate request to extend this from a key stakeholder:-

<b>Consultation &amp; Implementation Plan</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
Cabinet approval for Statutory Consultation	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
Testing and modelling within orchard to enable statutory consultation to begin	25 <sup>th</sup> January – 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Preparation of FAQs, literature and website material	April 2019
<b>Statutory Consultation begins</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019 (additional time allowed for given summer holidays)</b>
Correspondence sent out to all consultees including indicative banding to those on the housing register	By end of June 2019
Workshops and focus groups completed	By end of August 2019
Evaluation of all feedback	By end of September 2019
Report for Portfolio Holder to approve and refer for Full Council final approval	By end of October 2019
Revised Banding letter to all service users	By November 2019
Production of new policy, summary booklet and updated web site	By end of December 2019
Training and staff guidance for 'go live' of new policy	Ongoing until launch December 2019
Annual Review of allocations impact	2020
Full review of the policy in the context of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and future allocations requirements	2020/2021

The main body of the report details the impact of each of the proposed changes and members are referred to that section to inform a full understanding. In summary the head line changes are simply listed below:-

	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Summary Information</b>
1	Disqualification of those with <b>no</b> housing	Likely to affect 802 of 841 in band 4. Band 4 not removed

	need	
2	Cancel housing applications where no bids received in preceding 12 months	706 have not bid in 12 months, this is aimed at changing the culture to one of management of the register rather than allowing households to sit on a “waiting list – just in case”
3	Cancel applications where 3 offers have been refused	This would have only affected 12 in the last 12 months, but if implemented would ensure a more targeted and effective use of housing resources
4	More focused support of those in band1 and band 1+	73 households are currently in these bands and this is an increasing figure. Tailored housing based support plans is a principle already used for homelessness and use across the register, will ensure expectations are managed and the widest possible housing solutions explored including the private sector
5	Amendments to cumulative preference	Review with partners (particularly GPs) around how combined needs impact on priority to ensure housing need is not escalated for non related issues, such as incentive to move schemes
6	Introduction of a financial threshold allowing access to the register only if they are unable to fund an alternative solution	This is open for consultation as currently this can be based on savings &/or income levels and is a useful consultative question.
7	Strengthening of local connection	This is already robust in Tamworth but will be extended to ensure living or caring within Tamworth for 2 consecutive years and employment is having a contract for at least 12 months.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from implementing changes to the allocations policy. There are associated costs arising from the consultation, but on the basis costs are likely to be minimised by using digital forms of communications, it is expected these are likely to be ‘de minimus’. Costs are likely to be less than £5k and can be met from within existing budgets within the housing solutions based funding streams.

## LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

Legal and risk implications have been assessed throughout the project and it is recommended that legal advice is obtained prior to final implementation in 2019. Headlines risks are summarised below:-

Risks	Mitigation
Service user dissatisfaction as those with no housing need are not able to access the housing register	Whilst this may potentially remove a lot of those in Band 4 from the register, these are generally applicants who are highly likely not to be allocated and have no identified housing need and therefore helps to manage expectations.

	<p>Most local authorities have now implemented similar policies with some more stricter, by not doing so potentially we are not protecting those applicants with high housing needs in the same way.</p> <p>This is generally In line with powers from the Localism Act and also in line with code of guidance for allocation as well as other regulation and guidance from MHCLG.</p> <p>Most applicants who were allocated in Band 4 were ones that were offered sheltered accommodation and this will be un affected as advertising of properties will still continue through the Councils Finding a home service.</p>
Rationalisation of the housing register may well lead to demand issues elsewhere within the councils stock	The Councils 'finding a home' service is essentially an advertising tool and allocation is based on need and then on waiting time so properties will continue to be let on this basis
Approach to review of housing applications may be considered aggressive as people are removed from the register	The Housing register is not designed to be a 'waiting list just in case'. Effective use of the register will allow 'true' housing need to be assessed and appropriate strategies within the wider allocation and homelessness strategy enabled to target earliest help and expand the widest possible housing based solutions
Insufficient properties (supply) to meet demand	This is true and represents, largely a national picture. Housing need in the local plan is assessed as requiring 183 affordable units of which 40 are viable. Management of the housing register is part of regulating this demand, alongside other measures within the Housing Strategy to secure innovative approaches to increasing supply
Confusion to service users during transitional phases	A summary of changes including a set of FAQs will be developed for the web site. Implementation will not take place until full consideration as been given to the proposals and final authority given for implementation – effectively meaning business as usual up until formal implementation
Impact of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 may require the allocations policy to be restructured again leading to more confusion	There are likely to be opportunities for review and HQN are being engaged to work on the gathering of homeless insight and intelligence to inform the

	development of the homelessness strategy as well as support integration and links with the allocations policy
Resources may well be stretched as this represents a complex project	That is true and a project team with clear resourcing plan with detailed work-streams will be agreed through the councils programme management arrangements

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Sustainability of balanced and vibrant communities is part of the Councils strategic DNA around achieving its vision of “One Tamworth perfectly placed, open for business since the 7<sup>th</sup> Century AD”. Allocation of accommodation is fundamental to this to ensure aspiration and housing need are managed recognising the overall shortage of affordable housing.

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

### Documents attached

Allocation of housing by the Council is covered by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. It has however been substantially amended by the Homelessness Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011, there is also a series of statutory guidance notes which Councils have to consider when designing and implementing new schemes. Further the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has led to Councils reviewing allocations policies specifically around linked areas such as qualification, homeless prevention, homeless relief and how reasonable preference categories support aims around settled and sustainable tenancies.

For these reasons Tamworth has fully reviewed its allocations policy as part of its continued focus on homelessness prevention as well as recognising its own landlord obligations as it makes best use of its own stock. The Housing Quality Network reviewed all of its documents and confirmed the “current state of play on allocations policy making is exemplary” and their feedback has been incorporated ahead of more formal consultation.

<b>Document Annex</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1. Draft Housing Allocations Policy 2018-2020	Full draft policy setting out the Councils approach to the management of its housing register
2. Finding a home	Details of the management of the Councils scheme to advertise and allocate properties
3. Escalation Protocol	Arrangements for ensuring transparency where allocations involve the letting of properties to relatives and/or friends of councillors, staff and where there is a presenting perception of a conflict of interest
4. Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Presentation 16/10/18	Summary presentation to the Councils scrutiny committee detailing the matters for consideration when reviewing its Allocations policy
5. Summary of Proposed	All key changes listed and explained

Changes	
6. HQN review September 2018	Independent report based on the proposals and endorsing the councils approach
7. Community & Equality Impact Assessment	Each of the changes explained and the impact assessed for client groups and demographics effected

### Consultation Plan & Timeline

The only formal requirement is that Councils consult with housing associations that are covered by nominations agreements. However, good practice and feedback from Scrutiny, suggests this is extended and will therefore cover the following:-

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Details and Methodology</b>
Existing applicants on the housing register	Letter with FAQ, summary of changes and indicative banding
Tenant Consultative Group	Workshop with HQN
Registered Providers with nomination potential (and those with formal agreements)	Copies of Correspondence with on-line survey for feedback as well as telephone update
Third sector Partners on the electronic directory	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet
SCC Adult Social Care and Childrens Services	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet
Health Sector and CCGs regarding medical priorities (including retained GP advice)	Electronic email with FAQs and feedback sheet
Tamworth's Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	February Workshop (2019) as requested October 2018
Focus Group involving potential applicants from the current housing application pool	Officer led workshops with combination of tenants' on the active database and residents from 'tamworth listens'
Portfolio Holder & Cabinet	Detailed discussions based on community impact and localised modelling as feedback is used to inform further development of the policy

In the relevant housing legislation and guidance, there is no time limit period specified. However general government guidance states that normally a 12-week period should be adopted by public bodies on consultation. Therefore in discussion with the Portfolio Holder a minimum of 12-weeks will be allowed to ensure:-

- Overall clarity of purpose is captured within the consultation process
- Areas are highlighted and the focus remains on the updated areas and as feedback is incorporated the impact assessment can be properly assessed
- Ensuring material is readily available, easy to understand and time is given to digest the FAQ and wider detail

On this basis the timetable for consultation is summarised above in the executive summary

## Summary of Changes & Community Based Impact Assessment

Each of the proposed changes have been assessed with regard to the Councils duties around the Equality Act 2010. Full details are shown at Annex 7 but Cabinets attention is drawn to the summary details below.

### **Change 1- Disqualification of those with no housing need**

One of the largest changes being consulted on is the potential for those with no housing need and no local connection to be disqualified from the housing register. Whilst this would not remove Band 4 in its entirety a substantial amount of those in Band 4 would be affected.

- How many may be affected by this change?

As of the end of March 2018 - there were 841 people in Band 4. 18 of these were in Band 4 as they had a local connection but they also had a reduced preference from Band 3, these would not be affected and would be expected to be able to remain.

There are 21 applications which have no local connection but have a housing need, depending on whether they met the new local connection criteria they may or may not be able to remain on the housing register.

There are 802 applications in Band 4 due to having no housing need in accordance with the policy, of which 536 also have no local connection, with the remaining 266 having a local connection but no housing need.

Based on this information approximately 802 applicants would be at risk of removal from the housing register for having no housing need.

Whilst this information was taken at the end of March and end of financial year there has only been a marginal change in the numbers in Band 4 with only a reduction of 4 overall.

- Why this change may be positive?

The council wants to make this change for several reasons, as an authority the council is trying to effectively manage demand and reduce costs and drive efficiency's. Of those in Band 4 many will rarely if ever get allocated. Properties tend to be allocated to those in much higher bands; it's exceptionally rare for customer to be housed who is Band 4. As a council it is also important to manage customers' expectations and based on the data available, many of those have an unrealistic expectation of being housed.

### **Change 2- Cancel applications where no bids have been placed for 12 months**

The council are consulting whether to include provision within the allocation policy for cancelling applications where they have not bid for 12 months. The council want the housing register to remain an active reflection of those in housing need that need to move. The council believe that within a 12 month period there would be sufficient available and suitable properties for households to bid on. Should a property not become available within this time this may be because of unrealistic expectations customers have on being housed in particular type properties and in restricted areas.

A report indicates that as of the end of March 2018, 706 applications had not bid within a 12 month period, this represents that around 50% of those on the housing register either do not want to move or need to move.

It would be expected there would be cost efficiency made in reducing the numbers of the housing register, and therefore in redistributing resources or staff time to be used for other more meaningful work, i.e. assist in triage or preventing homelessness. There are ongoing costs to the council to keep the housing register up to date and associated ongoing administration. Additionally each year on an annual anniversary of their application input, all applicants are written too to confirm whether their application is to be renewed; therefore costs may also be saved here through reducing the register.

Additionally, it may encourage more applicants to bid on properties and so hard to let properties may also mean they have bids placed on by applicants. Whilst there were 705 applications that had not bid the vast majority of these were in Band 4 and most would be at risk of removal due to having no need- However, 195 applications which had not had a bid placed in the previous 12 months were in Bands 1+3 and therefor these would potentially be at risk of removal in addition to the 802 at risk of disqualification for having no housing need.

### **Change 3- Cancel applications where applicants refuse 3 suitable properties**

The council are consulting where applicants who refuse 3 or more suitable properties have their application cancelled.

The council are exploring this as another way to manage demand, customer expectation and make efficiencies. The council want to encourage that when applicants are bidding they are bidding on properties they have a reasonable expectation they would accept.

Following a report there are only 12 applications currently active that have refused more than 3 properties so this change would not affect a large volume of applications but would still help contribute to a more active housing register and one that is more reflective of need, however this would need to balance up whether given this change is affecting few whether the time taken to administrate this issue would be effective and serve a useful purpose.

### **Change 4- More focussed management of Band 1 and Band 1+ and changes to 'priority card'**

Applicants should only be in these highest bands where they represent having the highest housing need and most urgent need to move.

Through analysis of those in these bands as of the end of March there were 73 applications which fell in these bands of which 7 were in Band 1+ and 66 in Band 1. Of these applications currently there are 14 applications in Band 1 which have never placed a bid. Furthermore there are an additional 32 applications which have not placed a bid within the last 3 months.

It is stated in the current allocations policy with regards to applicants given a priority card the following;

*“Applicants placed into Band 1+ and Band 1 will be subject to a 2 month ‘priority card’. This will ensure that housing staff are monitoring and supporting applicants in bidding or identifying housing options. At the end of the 2 months, subject to a satisfactory review, the priority can be extended by a further 2 months, by which time there is an expectation that the applicant’s housing needs would have been met or the duty to re-house discharged.”*

This clearly indicates there is a reasonable expectation from the council that such applicants with this housing need and urgency to move will have been housed within 2 months or at the outset 4 months. The data indicates therefor that Band 1s are not being adequately monitored controlled or that the policy is not being enforced. In order to ensure the register remains active of those who want and need to move, Band 1 needs to be properly monitored and applicants given this priority are supported to do so, where applicants are resistant to this they may find their application is cancelled or their banding demoted to reflect that their need to move was not as high or urgent as initially deemed. There may be further clarity needed within the allocations policy to address this and powers given to officers to ensure this can be done.

Through implementing this change the council could ensure that those in Band 1 do have an urgent need to move and are willing to do so, helping to contribute that the housing register is one that remains active, reflective of need and that officers time and resource is not spent administering applications where there is little intention to move.

#### **Change 5- Amendment of cumulative preference categories**

The council wants to ensure that where applicants are encountering multiple housing issues that they are adequately banded to reflect this. However this has to be properly managed to ensure that those most housing need still retain the highest band. Sometimes applicants may be awarded several bandings resulting from the same set of circumstances. For example some council tenants are awarded incentive to move due to under occupying a property but are also awarded under occupancy banding. The resulting effect would mean someone who is under occupying 2 bedrooms and accepted for incentive to move, are placed into Band 1 + and also rewarded financially for in effect the same set of circumstances. Whilst the council recognises that it is important to adequately encourage applicants to move and free up larger accommodation it is also important to balance this with other groups on the housing register that is also important to house- for example applicants occupying unsuitable accommodation or placing a financial burdens on the Council through placement in expensive temporary accommodation.

Looking at the available data there are currently 7 applications in Band 1+. Of these 3 are in band 1 due to the cumulative effect of incentive to move and under occupancy, 1 high medical and overcrowding, 1 under occupancy and best use of stock, 1 for high medical and social needs and 1 for member of armed forces with serious injury. Only one of these applications have placed a bid within the past 3 months, with one applicant having not bid since 2014.

#### **Change 6- Inclusion of Financial Threshold**

As little information is currently captured regarding finances of applicants it is difficult to predict the impact this may have in terms of numbers that may be disqualified. However there are several ways financial threshold may be implemented within the

allocations policy and this is an area we hope to focus on through the consultation and conclude how it best be may be applied. The key issue to focus on is what threshold may entitle an applicant is able to access other tenures such as private rental accommodation.

The current proposal is to have 2-fold financial threshold-

- a) Savings threshold
- and
- b) Income cap

With the current proposal using a savings threshold standing at £16,000 and income threshold

- Single person households with a household net income of £30,000 or more per year
- Family households (this includes couples) with a household net income of £60,000 or more per year.

Whilst the income threshold includes all income, disability benefits would be exempt as would money attributed to injury whilst serving in armed forces.

When exploring the current market rent summary for Tamworth it shows the average cost of property rents within Tamworth are as follows:

<b><u>Average property rents in Tamworth:</u></b>	£707 pcm
<b>Property Rents in Tamworth by Number of Bedrooms</b>	
	<b>Average rent</b>
<u>One bedroom</u>	£500 pcm
<u>Two bedrooms</u>	£656 pcm
<u>Three bedrooms</u>	£758 pcm
<u>Four bedrooms</u>	£1,048 pcm
<b>Property Rents in Tamworth by Type</b>	
	<b>Average rent</b>
<u>Room</u>	£364 pcm
<u>Flat</u>	£581 pcm
<u>House</u>	£786 pcm

\*\*Data taken from [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk)  
[https://www.home.co.uk/for\\_rent/tamworth/current\\_rents?location=tamworth](https://www.home.co.uk/for_rent/tamworth/current_rents?location=tamworth)  
 Therefor when using these figures when using the average market rent of £707 pcm this would equate to approximately 14% of the total yearly income, and the top -end of the property scale using a 4 bed average private rental property would equate to approximately 21% of yearly income.

As a general rule, for accommodation to be affordable, housing costs should not be higher than approximately a 1/3 of annual income. Therefore on this basis, for applicants earning above this amount it would generally be able to afford alternative accommodation when their income is above £60,000 for family households.

When considering a savings threshold of £16,000 using these same figure it would generally be acceptable to consider when an applicant has this amount of savings they could also access accommodation in the private sector. Generally to secure accommodation applicants would be required to provide approximately one month's rent as a deposit and one month's rent in advance. Therefore in equating this to the average rental price this would be in the region £1414 and therefore this would still leave more than sufficient savings for applicants to use personally and for other needs. Given this is also in-line with the threshold universally used by DWP it would also represent this be a fair assumption.

**Change 7- Changes to qualification and local connection criteria**

As little information is currently captured regarding the new criteria it's difficult to predict how many might be affected by this change. However in analysing the register most applicants with a current local connection will be un-affected by the change as most appear to have been resident for more than 2 years. Furthermore many of applicants who haven't may still be able to qualify due to employment or other family/welfare reasons. Additionally there are several more special criterion and discretions which may be utilised for them to be still be considered and for exceptional circumstances and due regard has been given groups included in the public sector equality duty.

**Housing Supply**

Demand for social Housing in Tamworth continues to far outstrip the supply the information below helps illustrate this further.

**Number of Lettings**

The number of lettings made over the previous three years is as follows (excluding mutual exchanges and use in occupation):

2015	258
2016	261
2017	259

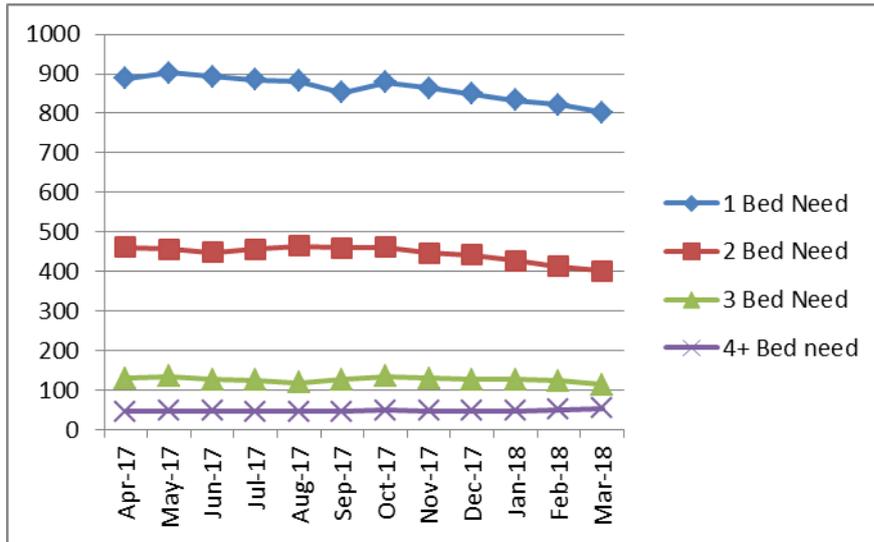
Comparatively speaking the average number of applications on the housing register for the previous 3 years has been the following;

2015/16	1624
2016/17	1585
2017/18	1491

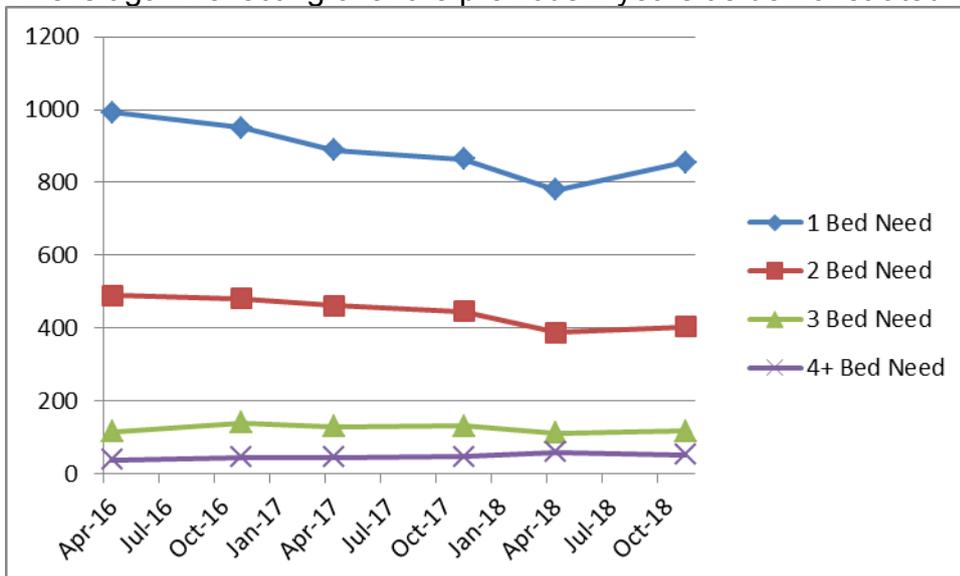
**Housing demand**

The demand for 1 bedroom accommodation far outstrips the needs of any other bedroom accommodation.

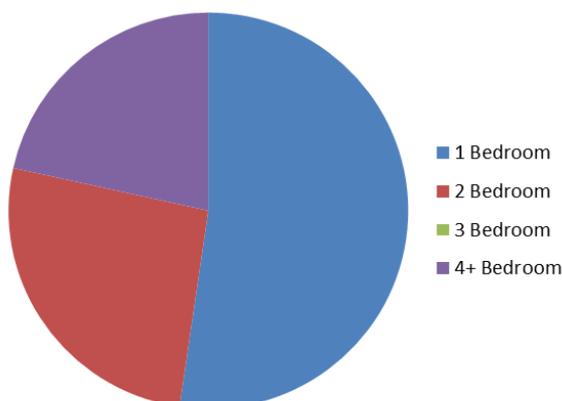
Over the course of the previous financial year, 1 bedroom accommodation has continued to be most in demand, with over 50% of those on the register requiring it. 2 bedroom accommodation is next in demand with much less applications requiring 3 bedroom accommodation or being 4+ bedroom need.



This is again reflecting over the previous 2 years as demonstrated below.



Of those in Band 1 and Band 1+ most of those also require 1 bedroom accommodation- from the latest list of those in Band 1 taken from the end of March 2018- over 50% of those in the highest bands required a 1 bedroom property, the chart below illustrates this further.



Affects of the proposed changes on bedroom need demand  
When considering the changes its

important to consider the changes in the dynamics of the housing register, given a large number of applicants would be risk of removal from the housing register if these changes went ahead it's important to consider if these changes would affect the dynamics of the housing register.

As of the end of November 2018 there were 837 applicants on the housing register which fell into band 4- their bedroom need is made up of follows-

<b>Bedroom Need</b>	<b>Number of applicants</b>
1	522
2	241
3	64
4+	10

If we only consider those in Band 4 that would be likely to remain, as they otherwise would have reasonable preference but have been temporarily reduced this would be the approximate dynamics of band 4:-

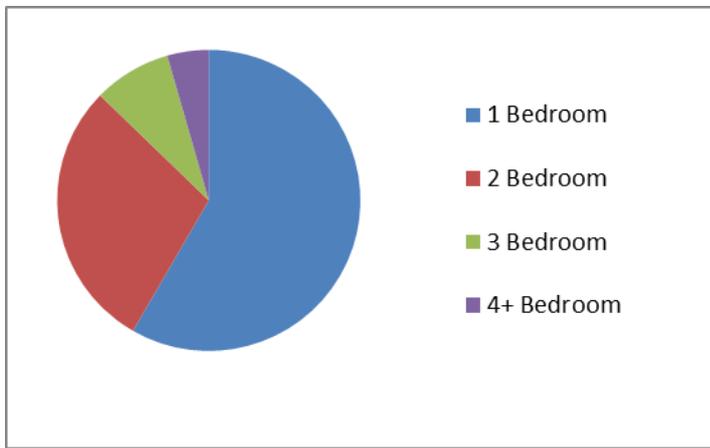
<b>Bedroom Need</b>	<b>Number of applicants</b>
1	17
2	13
3	7
4+	2

When looking at the dynamics of the register as a whole when we remove those applicants who have no housing need the dynamics of the housing register may approximately resemble more as follows:-

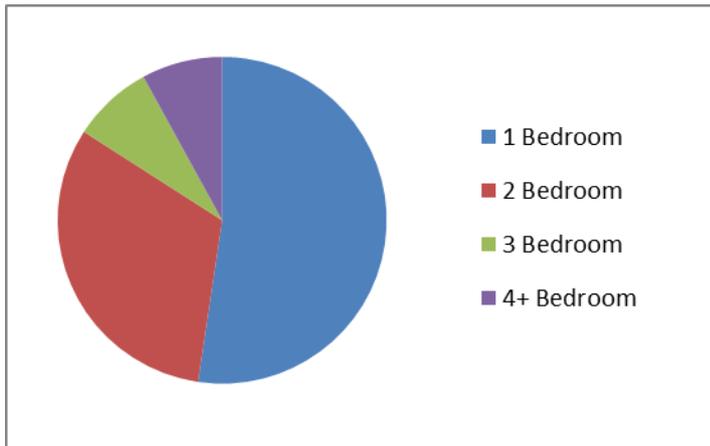
<b>Bedroom need</b>	<b>Number of applicants</b>
1	290
2	176
3	44
4+	44

This can be further shown in the charts below that illustrate the affects of the removal of those with no housing need will have on the bedroom need before and after the changes.

Before-



After –



Whilst this does resemble a change in the number requiring a 1 bedroom property, 1 bedroom properties would still be most in demand and account for over 50% of the housing register, with 2 bedroom properties also increasing in share of the demand.

### **Consideration of closing list to ‘transfer applicants’**

When exploring the impact of the Allocations Policy, due regard was given as to whether the council should adopt to close the list to transfer applicants. The current proposal is not to adopt this and still allow transfer applicants but only where there is a housing need. This has been proposed due to the increase of demand forcing applicants to resort to a mutual exchange only which may have an impact on resources and also when planning for the future based on properties that are being built and future numbers of nominations that will need to be filled.

### **Consideration of amending preference given to 60+ for bungalows**

Due consideration was given as to whether the priority group for general needs accommodation should be amended, however it was decided not to propose this at this stage in order to protect the council's adapted stock from right to buy and also based on over 60+ continues to present as a prevailing demographic within the area and the need for accommodation suitable for the elderly will increase as the population ages. Additionally there are currently no issues with these being difficult to let properties.

## Current Housing Demand and historical trends

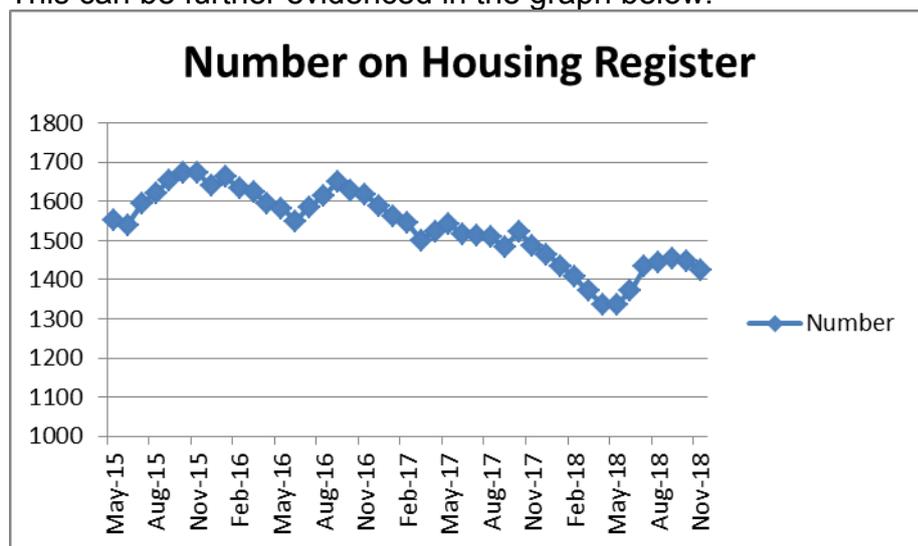
As of the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 there are currently 1426 on the housing register, this has gradually declined over the previous years due to greater management on the housing register and also changes to the Allocation Policy introduced in 2014 which disqualified more people.

How this has declined since 2012 is demonstrated as follows:

Year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Households on the Housing Register
2012	2104
2013	1783
2014	1727
2015	1625
2016	1598
2017	1500
2018	1337

However the number on the housing register has increased slightly to 1426 as of the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

This can be further evidenced in the graph below.



In terms of the current breakdown of the housing register and how the 1426 falls into banding categories and bedroom needs this is as follows:

### Number of Applications by Band

	No of Apps
Band1	71
Band1+	3
Band2	301
Band3	214
Band4	837

Total:	1426
--------	------

### Number of Applications by Bedroom Needs

No of Beds	No of Apps
1	855
2	404
3	116
4	38
5	11
6	1
7	1
Total:	1426

### Number of Apps by Band and Bedroom Need

Banding	Bedroom Need	No of Apps
Band1	1	41
Band1	2	18
Band1	4	2
Band1	5	8
Band1	6	1
Band1	7	1
Band1+	1	3
Band2	1	160
Band2	2	81
Band2	3	33
Band2	4	24
Band2	5	3
Band3	1	129
Band3	2	64
Band3	3	19
Band3	4	2
Band4	1	522
Band4	2	241
Band4	3	64
Band4	4	10
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>1426</b>

### REPORT AUTHOR

Tina Mustafa Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods ext 467



This page is intentionally left blank