

| <b>Current Policy</b>                                                     | <b>Original proposal</b>                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Revised proposal</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open housing register<br>With limited restrictions<br>for ASB             | Access to the Register<br>to be via a set of<br>qualifying criteria.<br>Those who have no<br>housing need will be<br>excluded as will those<br>who can afford to meet<br>their own housing need | The Housing Register will remain<br>'open'. Those who have no housing<br>need will continue to be able to join<br>the Register.                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| At present any household<br>can bid for any suitable<br>property          | No proposal was<br>originally made                                                                                                                                                              | The Council will publish an annual<br>Lettings Plan. This will set out<br>specific opportunities for bidding.<br>This may limit bidding for high<br>demand properties to those in higher<br>bands. | This proposal will enable the<br>Council to manage the<br>expectations of those on the<br>Register who are applying for<br>higher demand properties.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| All accepted homeless<br>households are prioritised<br>for social housing | Where possible the<br>Council will make an<br>offer of a suitable Private<br>Rented Property and this<br>will be considered to<br>discharge our duty.                                           | The proposal stands                                                                                                                                                                                | A separate Discharge policy<br>will govern how this is<br>applied. It should be noted<br>that due to the low numbers<br>of Private Rented homes<br>there will be a limit in the<br>number of households<br>housed into the private<br>sector. The homes will be<br>assessed to ensure that they<br>are suitable, affordable to the<br>household and free from<br>hazards. |

|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Bedroom need triggered by each child over 5 years of age if opposite gender to any sibling</p>                                                 | <p>Bedroom need calculated in the same way as HB. This means that children under the age of 16 will be expected to share, if they are the same gender. If they are under ten they will share regardless of gender.</p> | <p>Proposal stands</p>                                                                                                                               |                                                                                          |
| <p>A bedroom is allowed for parents with 50% access to a child who lives permanently elsewhere</p>                                                | <p>Applicants with shared access to children will not be allocated additional bedrooms unless their household is the Childs permanent residence.</p>                                                                   | <p>Proposal stands</p>                                                                                                                               | <p>The household receiving the Child Benefit will be the one allocated the priority.</p> |
| <p>No additional priority for households wishing to move because of property is too large unless they qualify for an incentive to move scheme</p> | <p>A phased level of need depending on the number of spare bedrooms:<br/> 2+ Spare rooms = B1<br/> 1 spare rooms = B2</p>                                                                                              | <p>Proposal stands.<br/> Banding award for the numbers of bed rooms short due to overcrowding will mirror the number of bed rooms under occupied</p> |                                                                                          |
| <p>Register is open to anyone aged 16 or over</p>                                                                                                 | <p>Restricting the register to applicants aged 18 or over unless they are protected under the Children's Act.</p>                                                                                                      | <p>Proposal Stands</p>                                                                                                                               |                                                                                          |

|                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Additional priority is given to tenants of 1 <sup>st</sup> floor flats with children aged under 5 who wish to transfer         | No additional priority will be given for transferring tenants based on the property type and /or age of the children resident | Proposal Stands                                                                                                                                       |                                                                            |
| Applicants who have more than 1 acknowledged 'need' within a band can be awarded a cumulative need to move up to the next band | Cumulative need will be removed                                                                                               | Additional preference will be given for those with multiple needs.                                                                                    | Consideration will be given to outsourcing the assessment of medical need. |
| No requirement to have a local connection with the Borough to access the housing register                                      | Introduce local connection criteria as part of the 'qualification' element of access to the register                          | Local connection will apply however rather than exclusion from the Register those who do not meet the criteria will have a reduced priority to band 4 |                                                                            |
| An automatic band 3 priority for any applicant seeking to move out of the family home                                          | This will be removed and applicants assessed on need                                                                          | Proposal stands                                                                                                                                       |                                                                            |
| A bedroom need is awarded at the confirmation of a pregnancy where the birth of a baby will require an additional bedroom      | A bedroom need will be applied at 20 weeks gestation where the birth will generate a need                                     | Proposal stands                                                                                                                                       |                                                                            |

## **Key issues summary discussion note**

### **Access to the Housing Register:**

The original proposal involved restricting access to the Housing Register for those without a housing need. The reason for implementing this change was principally to encourage those with no housing need to seek their own housing solutions

This proposal has evolved to allow for access to the register for all qualifying people. In summary non-qualifying people are:

People from abroad who have restricted access to 'public assistance'  
Those who have been guilty of 'unacceptable behaviour'

Those with no housing need will therefore be able to join the housing register but will be placed in Band Four.

### **Why has this proposal changed?**

The proposal has changed because:

1. Although some property types are in high demand there are others which are not- for example older person's accommodation.
2. The processing of assessing qualification at the point of allocation is likely to be administratively burdensome and will open the Council to risk of appeal and challenge
3. Although assessed as having no housing need under the scheme once registered these households can be offered advice and support on various alternative housing options

In addition the revised policy will include the delivery of an annual lettings plan. This will restrict bidding for some households in respect of some properties. This could be for a range of reasons including targeted geographical objective. It can also be applied to restrict bidding for targeted property types (for example 2 bedroom properties). It is considered that this changed approach will support the delivery of the original objective without the inherent risks.

## Local Connection

The Council currently operates an open Housing Register with no geographical restriction. The original proposals included proposals to include a local connection requirement as part of the qualifying criteria.

It is proposed that the Council implements a Local Connection requirement and that those failing this criteria will result in a reduced preference. This will ensure that those applying from outside of the area for low demand properties will always be at a lower priority than those with a local connection who are in housing need.

The Council has considerable discretion in relation to the definition of Local Connection. The recommended definition is:

Applicants will need to meet at least one of the following criteria to be defined as having a local connection to Tamworth:

- Have lived in the district for a period of at least 6 out of the previous 12 months continuously
- Previously lived in the district for 3 out of the past 5 years
- Have permanent employment within the district
- Close family members, who have lived in the district for at least 5 years and where there has been frequent contact commitment or dependency immediately prior to the date of the application

The above criteria is considered balanced. However the Council could apply a stricter criteria- for example requiring residency for 2 years prior to application. One issue to consider is that the local connection criteria does not apply to those applying to be re-housed under homelessness legislation where a different set of criteria apply. If the criteria is set to restrictively this could increase the number of households who therefore seek re-housing via the homelessness route.