

Appendix 3

Amendments to the Allocations Policy

There will be a need to make use of the flexibility within the existing Flintshire County Council Allocations Policy and Points Scheme to manage the changes and additional pressures associated with Welfare Reform. This is not the right time for a full review of the existing allocations policy as Flintshire is part of the North East Wales project developing a Common Housing Register and Common Allocations Policy. The Single Access Route to Housing is currently out for consultation and a pilot will be run from January 2014. Therefore, the proposals below provide interim solutions that will enable Flintshire County Council to allocate properties fairly to those in most housing need and appropriately manage the competing priorities.

Under Occupation and Overcrowding Points

The current policy awards 100 points to a tenant of Flintshire County Council who is living in a property too large for their needs and wishes to move to a smaller property. The policy does not currently differentiate between under occupiers of one bedroom or those under occupying by two or more bedrooms. There is a need to use flexibility within the existing policy to prioritise those under occupying by two bedrooms or more. The proposal is to add **50 management points** to ensure that those under occupying by two bedrooms or more are assessed as a higher priority.

The current policy awards 20 points for each bedroom the property lacks. The proposal is to add a further **50 management points** for households living in overcrowded properties. This will assist with releasing smaller properties for under occupiers and enable us to make best use of the Council's housing stock.

Quota System

The current policy would need a full review of the points system in order to balance the emerging priorities. There is a need for a policy that facilitates the management of the under occupation issue but also ensures that enough allocations are made to homeless applicants to prevent spiralling B&B costs. The policy must also allocate to those reasonable preference groups on the register with urgent medical needs or other high levels of housing need.

A successful system used elsewhere to ensure a spread of lets across the priority groups is to run a quota system. This would work by splitting the register into three groupings and setting a target percentage of lets for each group. This would need to be a flexible tool in order to manage the competing priorities and ensure fair and equitable allocation of properties in line with the existing policy. The proposals below will deliver an increase in allocations for homeless prevention, statutory homeless and under occupiers compared to figures provided for the past three months but will maintain an appropriate level for other forms of priority housing need.

Quota Proposal:

Group	% of lets (Oct 2012-Jan 2013)	Proposed % target
Homeless and Priority Need	19%	30%
Mainstream Housing Register	73%	50%
Under Occupiers	8%	20%

Sheltered Accommodation

The proposals above will assist us to manage the high demand for social housing and the shortage of available properties to meet the need. This is particularly an issue for smaller properties. Figures provided between October 2010 and October 2012 showed that only 40 general needs 1-bed properties became available across the 2-year period. There were 366 sheltered 1-bed properties let across the same period. We know that some of our sheltered stock is not ideal for the very elderly for a number of reasons. A reduction in the letting age for our sheltered stock to 50 where this is appropriate and managed in a sensitive manner would alleviate some of the shortage of flats for single occupants.

The sheltered service has been remodelled to a Community Based Accommodation Support Service and will be available across all tenures. Breaking the link between the support and the property means that an individual can be placed without support needs and then support can be introduced when needed. This change is unlikely to concern existing elderly residents who may object to 'young people' on the scheme. It should be noted that this will be a first step and will only have a limited impact. Further consideration will need to be given to re designation of some properties that are unsuitable as sheltered stock.