

# **Housing Services**

## **Rehousing Plan April 2016**

### **1. Rehousing Plan 2016**

- 1.1. For the last five years the Council has received an average of 450 to 500 social housing lettings per year from both local Registered Providers (through the nomination agreements) and from our Tenant Management Organisation.
- 1.2. This Rehousing Plan sets out how we will manage the allocation of properties to reconcile often competing internal and external pressures.
- 1.3. The Rehousing Plan is not time-limited, and will remain in place until repealed or superseded. An annual lettings analysis will be provided to demonstrate lettings performance against the Rehousing Plan.

### **2. Purpose of the Rehousing Plan**

- 2.1. This Rehousing Plan recognises that as a statutory housing authority we have a duty to house those we have accepted as homeless (under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996), and this duty can be met with a suitable offer of accommodation, including a suitable offer of a social housing tenancy or a suitable offer of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector.
- 2.2. Changes in the way temporary accommodation is funded and the impact of welfare reform mean there could be a cost to the Council of keeping high numbers of households in temporary accommodation, including those households subject to the Overall Benefit Cap and who are recognised as requiring local accommodation.
- 2.3. This pressure to end the housing duty towards homeless households must be balanced with the housing needs of the other groups (awarded reasonable preference and / or local preference) who require housing from our Register. The process for balancing the allocation of properties between these groups is set out firstly in our Housing Allocation Scheme, in terms of relative priority, and secondly within this Rehousing plan in terms of which groups will take precedence for quotas of lettings, particular sizes of accommodation, and certain direct offers of social housing.

### **3. Exclusions**

- 3.1. Some properties will be excluded from this Rehousing Plan. This is because they are types of housing required for specific purposes, or are allocated outside of the Council's Allocation Scheme. The properties are:
  - Intermediate housing units
  - Allocations through Local Lettings Plans



- RBKC and non-RBKC rehousing schemes that fall outside of the Allocation Scheme, for example HomeStart, Private Rented Access Scheme and Seaside and Country Home Scheme lets.

**4. Overarching balance between statutory homeless and non-homeless priority households**

4.1. All remaining affordable social housing properties will be let according to the following overarching principle:

- i) 60 per cent of properties will be offered to duty accepted homeless households using direct offers (as set out in section 7.2 of the Housing Allocation Scheme), or via choice-based lettings. Any direct offer will be suitable for the household.
- ii) 40 per cent of properties will be made available to non-homeless households through choice-based lettings, and via direct offers (as set out in our Housing Allocation Scheme).

4.2. This overall split will apply to bed sizes at various proportions as detailed in the table below and is dependent upon which sizes of property become available to let each week.

4.3. No distinction will be made between different types of tenancies or different tenancy lengths subject to any offer being in line with the suitability recommendation for an applicant, and all properties will be let in accordance with our Housing Allocation Scheme, the 1996 Housing Act (as amended), and related statutory guidance.

<b>TMO &amp; true void Registered Provider properties</b>	<b>Proposed Plan Overall 60/40 split</b>	<b>Groups to be prioritised</b>
Studios and One-beds	50/50	Between statutorily homeless households and other preference categories
Two-beds	80/20	Weighted in favour of statutorily homeless households
Three-beds	50/50	Between statutorily homeless households and other preference categories
Four-beds plus	50/50	Between statutorily homeless households and other preference categories

## 5. Specific Provisions

- 5.1. The Rehousing Plan contains a number of specific provisions which are set out below. The specific provisions fall within the 60/40 split between statutory homeless and non-homeless priority households, as appropriate.
- 5.2. **Direct offers will be made to duty accepted homeless households who have a local temporary accommodation suitability assessment which will result in a heavy financial burden upon the Council due to those households being subject to the Overall Benefit Cap.** This provision is set out in greater detail in Key Decision 04602/15/H/A and is governed by a Local Lettings Plan *Benefit Capped Households In Temporary Accommodation: Direct Offers Of Social Housing To Households Affected By The Benefit Cap Through A Local Lettings Plan*.
- 5.3. The households defined in 5.2 will be prioritised according to the size of the temporary accommodation rental shortfall (and therefore the necessary Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to cover the shortfall) resulting from the Overall Benefit Cap. Where two or more affected households are subject to the same rental shortfall, and have been recommended by the Council for rehousing to the same type of property (in terms of size and accessibility), the household with the highest priority or points (as defined by the Allocation Scheme) will be prioritised for allocation of social housing. If the above determinants remain equal, the household with the earlier priority date (as defined by the Allocation Scheme) will be prioritised for allocation of social housing.
- 5.4. The households defined in 5.2 will fall within the over 60 per cent of lettings to statutory homeless households.
- 5.5. **Direct offers will be made to households who qualify for the Royal Borough's Housing Register and to an allocation of social housing under the *Right to Move* provisions,** as laid out in *Right to Move: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local housing authorities in England (March 2015)*.
- 5.6. Households defined in 5.5 will be awarded 'Local hardship priority' under section 4.18 of the Royal Borough's Allocation Scheme February 2014 (or the appropriate section in any revised Scheme).
- 5.7. Households defined in 5.5 will be allocated social housing according to their priority date on the Housing Register, so that the household with the earliest priority date (verified application date) will receive the next direct offer of a property to this cohort. These households will be subject to provision for suspensions set out in section 5.2 of the Royal Borough's Allocation Scheme February 2014 (or the appropriate section in any revised Scheme).
- 5.8. The Council will determine and publish an annual quota of properties to be allocated to households defined in 5.5. In line with the *Right to Move: Statutory Guidance* and given the extreme pressures on both social housing and temporary accommodation in the Royal Borough, the quota will not exceed one per cent of the previous year's lettings (rounded up to a whole figure) for any given financial

year. For example, the Council allocated 502 properties between April 2014 and March 2015. Therefore, the Right to Move property quota for April 2015 to March 2016 will be six properties. The size of the property to be allocated will be determined by the needs of the eligible household under the terms of the Royal Borough's Allocation Scheme.

- 5.9. The households defined in 5.5 will fall within the over 40 per cent of lettings to non-statutory homeless households.
- 5.10. **Direct offers can be made to households who have been placed by the Council in a mother and baby unit** (such as Andrew Provan House) and who have been awarded either or both Move-on priority and / or Homeless duty priority under sections 4.12 and 4.13 of the Royal Borough's Allocation Scheme respectively (or the appropriate section in any revised Scheme). This provision will be enacted by and is set out in Key Decision 04764/16/H/A.
- 5.11. The households defined in 5.10 will be allocated social housing by the prioritisation process prescribed by the Allocation Scheme; the household with the highest priority or points will be prioritised for allocation of social housing and if two or more households share the same priority the household with the earliest priority date will be prioritised for allocation of social housing.
- 5.12. The Council will determine and publish an annual quota of properties to be allocated to households defined in 5.10. The quota will be established by the need to effect move-on for households residing in mother and baby supported accommodation who are ready for independent living but who are preventing residents who require the support from taking up placements. The quota for the period April 2015 to March 2016 is 10 properties.
- 5.13. The households defined in 5.10 will fall within the 60 per cent of lettings to statutory homeless households if they have been awarded homeless duty priority, and fall within the 40 per cent of lettings to non-statutory homeless if they have been awarded move-on priority only.
- 5.14. **All allocations of sheltered housing will be made by direct offer by the prioritisation process prescribed in the Allocation Scheme.**
- 5.15. **Accessible properties (defined by Categories A to D of the pan-London Accessible Housing Register) will ordinarily be allocated by direct offer in the first instance.** The Council may also make direct offers of step-free (Category E of the Accessible Housing Register). Where an accessible property cannot be let to a household who has been recommended for an appropriate accessible property, the property will be advertised on the Council's choice-based lettings scheme.
- 5.16. Accessible properties defined by 5.15 will be allocated by the prioritisation process prescribed in the Allocation Scheme.