

Housing Services Update
Planning, Housing and Economic Development PDS
May 2016

Housing Allocations Scheme Revisions

The current scheme known as Homesearch was approved November 2012 and we are now proposing a number of minor amendments to be approved in May 2016 (Forward Executive Plan Ref 2528). The amendments are required to allow flexibilities in line with subsequent statutory changes and to improve implementation in partnership with registered housing providers. The list of changes are show in Appendix 1.

Increased Demand for Housing Options & Homelessness Team

The number of households seeking assistance from the Housing Options & Homelessness Team has increased by around 20% during the last quarter compared to the previous year. This is a significant increase in caseload and reflects national trends. However, the increased demand has not, as yet, resulted in a significant uplift in the use of temporary accommodation.

Low Cost Home Ownership in Bath & North East Somerset

We have recently received the 2015/16 statement from Help to Buy South who are the Government's agent for running the Help to Buy register for the South of England. The Help to Buy agent is responsible for promoting all shared ownership sales as well as administering the Help to Buy equity loan scheme.

Help to Buy Register – Summary for Bath and North East Somerset

(for comparison, figures for the Help to Buy region are provided in brackets)

- 960 households registered
- Average income £26,498 (£28,964)
 - 32% household earns below £20,000
 - 47% applicants earn between £20 – 35,000
- Average savings for a deposit £18,213 (£15,375)
- Average age 35 (35)
- 41% households registered are single, 33% are couples
- 49% want to buy a house (56%)
- 54% want a 2 bed homes (55%)
- 45% currently live in the private rented sector (43%)

Help to Buy Activity in Bath and North East Somerset 2015/16

- 17 new shared ownership units completed in the District
- 15 Help to Buy transactions completed
 - 10 new build
 - 4 resales
 - 1 intermediate rented allocation
- Of the remaining 7 new build units
 - 2 are still being marketed
 - 5 are in conveyancing
- Of the 15 transactions
 - 8 flats, 7 houses
 - Average share purchased 43% (44%)
 - Average cost £83,300 (£86,000)
 - Average purchaser income £23,290 (£27,600)
 - Average deposit £4,114 (£4,299)

- Average age 39 (35)

Housing Services will consider the detailed report in full and will use the information provided to help advise on the nature of shared ownership units being sought through s106 delivery. A full copy of the report is available from liz_cox@bathnes.gov.uk and for more information on Help to Buy generally please visit www.helptobuysouth.co.uk

Enforcement Action

Housing Services regulate housing conditions in the private rented sector, including HMO licensing. This month an HMO landlord was successfully prosecuted for failing to license a licensable HMO in the Oldfield Park area and achieved total fines of £2600. A further four landlords were issued with formal cautions and costs for similar offences.

Key Projects Update

Foxhill Housing Zone, Combe Down

The Foxhill housing Zone is the combined development areas of the former Foxhill MOD site, now known as Mulberry Park, and the Foxhill estate which is proposed for regeneration alongside the development of 700 homes at Mulberry Park.

- Atlas are currently finalising their recommendations on the Foxhill Regeneration and Development Charter following a period of public consultation. These will be considered at a workshop with Cabinet and Ward members and senior management team representatives for the Council and Curo on 28 April 2016. The final Charter will be taken through Panel and onto Cabinet for approval later this summer.
- Curo have commenced public engagement on the master planning for the regeneration of the Foxhill estate. Early work has included understanding the community's aspirations for the regeneration and significant studies on the impacts on the possible densities of any redevelopment and what this means for the nature of any new development. This work is being undertaken with recognition of those home owners who have explicitly said they are not willing to sell their homes and the impact of the location of these homes against the wider Charter ambitions will be discussed at the workshop.
- Design of the community hub for Mulberry Park is well underway, supported by a working group made up of key stakeholders including council officers and representatives from local schools, churches, surgeries, community groups and businesses. This is the area of the site that comprises the primary school, community facility, employment space and pre-school as required by the s106 agreement. Public exhibitions around the Community Hub will be held in late April and then on 21 June, just prior to submission of the reserved matters planning application.
- For more information on Mulberry Park and the regeneration of Foxhill please visit www.mulberryparkbath.co.uk.

Carrswood Gypsy and Travellers Site

- The site is now fully operational. All 8 permanent pitches are occupied with Council nominated residents, 7 of whom had a local connection to B&NES. However, one of these will shortly become vacant following Elim securing possession as a result of rent arrears. At the time of writing all 5 transit pitches were also occupied.

- Following completion of all outstanding works the Council has now released the final grant payment to Elim, the developer and manager of the scheme.

Energy at Home

- The Energy at Home scheme is open to all residents and offers free energy efficiency advice and information and a home energy assessment and installations service.
- The Home Energy Top Up Grant scheme which is now closed will achieve 281 home improvements and 100% spend of the allocated government grant of £723,000.
- The current Energy at Home scheme offers the Warm Homes Grant scheme to help reduce fuel poverty and is delivered in partnership with Sirona Care and Health and the National Energy Action (NEA) charity.
- Details of all schemes are available from Energy at Home on 0800 038 5680 or www.energyathome.org.uk.

Affordable Housing Programme

- 2015/16 saw the completion of 142 new affordable housing units in Year 1 of a 3 year delivery target of 480 units.
- Forecast delivery for 2016/17 is 168 new affordable homes including the completion of four rural schemes, two in Farmborough, one in Freshford and another in Bathampton.
- The following affordable homes are forecast to complete in Q1:
 - Bilbie Green, Keynsham = 10 units
 - The Meadows, Keynsham = 21 units
 - Printworks, Paulton = 14 units
 - Knobsbury Lane, Writhlington = 4 units
 - Brookside Drive, Farmborough = 6 units

Q4 Performance

What we have done well...

- 100%** Homelessness decisions were made within 33 days.
- 100%** Equalities Impact Assessments are in place.
- 97%** Customers are satisfied with our services. We have exceeded the 90% customer satisfaction target. Putting the customer first and having high standards for the quality and timeliness of services is very important to us.
- 38%** Advice and prevention approaches were successful in preventing or relieving homelessness compared to the target of 33%.
- 142** New affordable homes were delivered in the year. Although this is slightly down against target (30% vs 33%) we are only 1 year in to a 3 year programme. We are working with delivery partners to keep on track with delivering new homes for residents.

How we will improve...

- 45** Weeks average time to complete adaptations for disabled facilities compared with a target of 35 weeks. This is a joint service provided by the Council's Occupational Therapy (OT) service and Housing Services. Unfortunately resourcing issues have resulted in significant delays by the OTs in completing client assessments and Housing Services have also been dealing with a large number of cases that are potentially exceeding the £30k financial cap. These are complex and take significantly more time to process.
- 69%** Complaints dealt with within corporate timescales, compared with a target of 87%. The service receives a comparatively low number of complaints (13 complaints received 2015/16). Generally the complaints are complex to resolve and 4 complaints exceeded the timescale. We will prioritise earlier actions to resolve within timescales.

HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 15/16		2014/15	2015/16					Year to date cumulative	Direction of travel (Q3 vs Q4)
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Customer									
Customer complaints (responded to within corporate timescales)	Target	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	
	Actual	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	69%	↓	
Customer satisfaction	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Actual	97.7%	97.9%	97.7%	100%	96.1%	97.2%	↓	
Staff Sickness	Target	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%		
	Actual	5.3%	2.8%	3.2%	1.7%	0.7%	2.1%	↑	
Telephone response (responded within corporate timescales)	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Actual	84.1%	88.4%	86.5%	86.6%	87.5%	86.3%	↓	
Equality Impact Assessment	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
	Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→	
Invoices paid within 30 days	Target	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%		
	Actual	76.2%	97.6%	86.7%	81.7%	Data not available	Data not available		
Customer Service Standards									
Customer satisfaction	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Actual	97.7%	97.9%	97.7%	100%	96.1%	97.2%	↓	
Customer satisfaction with improvements made to their home (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Actual	N/A	100.0%	96.8%	100%	96.1%	97.2%	↓	
Customers treated fairly (New indicator for 2015/6)	Target	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
	Actual	N/A	97.9%	97.7%	100%	100%	99.1%	↑	
Homelessness decisions	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
	Actual	78.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→	
Performance information published (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed		
	Actual	N/A	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed		

HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS15/16		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to date cumulative	Direction of travel (Q3 vs Q4)
Finding and Keeping Housing								
Homelessness cases prevented	Target	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%	
	Actual	37.9%	38.1%	41.7%	37.2%	35.8%	38.4%	↑
Homelessness decisions	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	
	Actual	78.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→
Temporary accommodation	Target	24	24	24	24	24	24	
	Actual	13	18	26	15	21	21	↓
Improved Homes								
Total time to complete adaptations - Average time from initial enquiry to completion in weeks	Target	35	35	35	35	35	35	
	Actual	39	36	54	39	45	45	↓
Additional HMO Licences issued (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	
	Actual	N/A	98.4%	98.5%	98.7%	98.4%	98.4%	↓
Customer satisfaction with improvements made to their home (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	
	Actual	N/A	100.0%	96.8%	100%	96.1%	97.2%	↓
Initial HMO Licence inspections (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	Actual	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	→
More Homes								
Empty properties brought back into use (cumulative)	Target	50	12	25	37	50	50	
	Actual	77	8	22	31	62	62	↑
Deliver 480 new affordable homes over a 3 year period 2015-2018 comprising both intermediate & social homes for rent cumulative (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	8%	16%	24%	33%	33%	
	Actual	N/A	2.3%	17.9%	24%	30%	30%	↑
Percentage of permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches occupied (New indicator for 2015/16)	Target	N/A	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	
	Actual	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→

Proposed Changes to Homesearch Scheme

Page	Change	Reason
7	'Pay to Stay' for affordable rented homes.	Proposed legislative changes, which will allow RPs to charge market rate for high earners, will result in potential conflict between statute and s106 planning agreements. The change is a pragmatic response to address this issue, ensuring that market rates can be temporarily applied but that rents revert to affordable rents on relet in accordance with s106 agreement.
10	Transfer of existing social tenants seeking to move to B&NES from another local authority district in England	Modification to allow implementation of new regulations, the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/967). The new regulations have changed an employment definition that establishes a local connection: existing social tenants seeking to transfer from another local authority district in England who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have reasonable preference under s.166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the local authority's district to avoid hardship, and • need to move because the tenant works in the district, or need to move to take up an offer of work
34	Restricting the number of bids per (weekly) cycle to a maximum of 3 per applicant	A few applicants, often those at the top end of the lists, have been making an excessive number of bids each week creating a significant administrative burden for the RPs and distorting the property bidding lists. This restriction encourages applicants to make more considered choices and speed up relet process.
40	New housing development lettings criteria	This modification means that individual local lettings policies for new housing developments will not be a necessary. It permits the selection of applicants for new housing developments comprising of nine or more units in order to create balanced and sustainable communities.
45	Shared ownership eligibility, qualification and priority criteria	New statutory guidance for RPs and potential purchasers of shared ownership units delivered through s106 without government subsidy. (reference to new

		Appendix 3)
46	Direct property allocation 'Selecting a property directly for an applicant'	Revision of existing point allowing the direct allocation to an applicant assisted through national Government Initiatives to include the National Witness Protection Scheme or through other national Government Initiatives.
47	Definition and allocation of hard to let properties and allocation of hard to let sheltered housing	Allows the direct allocation of a hard to let property. In particular this point can be used by RPS to allocate hard to let sheltered housing to people who are eligible for sheltered housing but do not have a local connection but who want to move to B&NES.
48	Non retention of household waiting time for a non-dependent making their own new application	Priority can depend on 'waiting time' and when a family separates both parties may retain the effective joining date provided the applications are continuous. Insertion of a text amendment to clarify that this does not apply to dependents ie young people who make a new application when they want to leave the family home.