

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 18 March 2021

Allocation Policy for Council Homes

Executive/Routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the information provided on the allocation policy, the operational processes and how these comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Assurance requirements and the legal framework governing allocations;
 - 1.1.2 Note the approach taken where households have known specific or complex needs in terms of housing options and access to suitable housing;
 - 1.1.3 Agree actions to improve advice and information on access to housing and management of exceptional housing need to improve outcomes for more vulnerable households outlined in paragraphs 4.28 to 4.32; and
 - 1.1.4 Agree to receive a further report to the next Committee on addressing exceptional need following engagement with key stakeholders.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Allocation Policy for Council Homes

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to a motion by Councillor Kate Campbell, approved by City of Edinburgh Council on [4 February 2021](#). It provides information on the policy framework for letting Council homes, how this aligns within the regulatory and statutory requirements for social housing allocations and highlights how the approach seeks to support households with exceptional and complex needs.
- 2.2 It also sets out the strategic partnership for allocating social rented homes through the common housing register in Edinburgh (EdIndex) and through the Choice based lettings approach (Choice) operated by the Council and the majority of the partner Housing Association/Co-operative landlords ('partner landlords').
- 2.3 Access to housing for households with specific needs such as households with mobility issues, or where there may be other urgent and/or complex needs, is challenging within a context of very high demand for social housing. The report sets out how this is managed alongside the wider allocation policy and operational framework.
- 2.4 Committee is asked to agree actions to improve advice and information on access to housing and the management of exceptional housing need and agree to receive a report at the next committee following consultation with key stakeholders.

3. Background

- 3.1 Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland with only 14% of homes in social rent compared to the national average of 23%. There is therefore very high demand from households looking to access social housing in the city. The local context for managing the supply and demand for social housing and other affordable housing options, and how this fits with the wider statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities for the Council, is essential in ensuring a planned approach to service improvements and in delivering positive outcomes for households.
- 3.2 The EdIndex Partnership, between the Council and 18 current partner landlords in the city, was established as the first common housing register in Scotland in 2003. This strategic and operational partnership aims to make it as straightforward as

possible for households to apply for social housing in the city while also providing information to help households make informed choices on other housing options that may be suitable given the significant demand for social housing in the city.

- 3.3 The EdIndex Partnership is managed through a Management Board made up of representatives from the Council and the partner landlords.
- 3.4 Available homes from the Council and the 16 partner landlords that operate Choice are advertised on the new website www.edindexhousing.co.uk, which replaced the 'Key to Choice' website on 29 January 2021. (Two partner landlords let their homes under a harmonised group plus points system). Around 21,700 households are currently registered with EdIndex with around 30-40% of applicants actively bidding for homes each week depending on the type, size and location of homes becoming available. Households can be awarded a Gold or Silver priority status based on their assessed housing need and there are currently around 5,700 applicants with a priority on their application with an average of only around 2,300 social rented homes becoming available each year.
- 3.5 The Council manages EdIndex and the 'Choice' system on behalf of the partner landlords, who contribute to the costs of the service based on the social housing stock they have in the city.
- 3.6 The current Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had an impact on the level of homes becoming available for let due to reduced turnover and the operation of safe working for letting homes in line with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidance. Overall available social rented homes for re-let are down by around 25% this year with an average of around 203 bids currently being received for available homes advertised through Choice. In accordance with Scottish Government guidance for social landlords during the Covid-19 pandemic, lets from the Council and partner landlords have been targeted to assist homeless households and/or households that have an extreme housing need.
- 3.7 The legal framework for social housing allocations has been updated periodically since it was first introduced through the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, most recently by provisions included in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 that came into force in 2019. These changes were designed to increase the flexibility landlords have in managing allocations to meet the needs of the communities in which they operate and to make best use of stock. Other public service legislation is also relevant to ensuring allocations are legally compliant in areas such as homelessness, equalities, human rights and data protection.
- 3.8 The [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) (SHR) monitors, assesses, reports and intervenes (as appropriate) on social landlords' performance of housing activities. The current regulatory framework came into force in April 2019 and requires all Scottish social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement confirming that they comply with the relevant requirements of Chapter Three of the Regulatory Framework, including their approach to letting homes. Committee approved the current Annual Assurance Statement for the Housing Service in [September 2020](#).

- 3.9 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve. The Charter requires landlords to perform all aspects of their housing services so that all tenants and other customers have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect and receive fair access to housing and housing services.
- 3.10 The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee agreed the second iteration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) on [18 September 2020](#), which has been submitted to the Scottish Government. The RRTP includes a commitment to a rehousing target for social lets of a minimum of 70% Council homes (across existing and new build homes) being allocated to homeless households and 50% for lets from Housing Associations in Edinburgh. These targets take account of the significant demand for social housing and the requirements to provide housing to meet other priority/urgent housing need.
- 3.11 The Council's response to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was agreed at the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on [14 January 2021](#). This included a HARSAG recommendation on maximising social housing (80-90% of lets) for homeless households for a period of time during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council response, agreed by Committee, set out that during the period when the advertising of homes was suspended landlords worked with Homelessness services to make some empty homes which were not already pre- allocated, available for emergency use including use as temporary accommodation and a small number of homes for urgent permanent homes. Since the advertising of homes recommenced until the end of January 2021 the Council and partner Housing Associations in Edinburgh advertised just over 1,400 homes and around 90% of these were available for homeless households to bid on.

4. Main report

Scottish Housing Regulator requirements on allocations and Council compliance

- 4.1 Landlords are required to operate a fair and open housing list ('register') and anyone aged 16 or over is entitled to be admitted to a 'register'. These requirements are met in relation to the operation of EdIndex. The right to be admitted to a housing list is not however the same as a right to be allocated a house, which is determined in accordance with the relevant legal provisions and landlord allocation policies.
- 4.2 Government policy and housing legislation requires that landlords allocate their housing based on an objective and non-discriminatory assessment of housing need. There are not enough available homes for everyone who applies for social housing in Edinburgh. Assessing the needs of each household and allocating homes in a fair and consistent way therefore ensures that available homes are let to those in the greatest need of housing in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements and the Council commitments in the RRTP.

4.3 Housing legislation requires landlords to give a reasonable level of priority to certain categories of applicants. Reasonable preference refers to a level of priority given to applicants under certain circumstances and the current reasonable preference categories were set under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 provisions that came into force in 2019. Details of the current reasonable preference categories and how the current Council/Choice letting policy complies with these requirements is shown in Table 1 below.

Table1

Reasonable Preference Group	Choice Based Priority Status
Homelessness - with unmet housing need*	Silver priority – households assessed as statutorily homeless
Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions - with unmet housing need*	Urgent Gold - delayed discharge Gold priority – assessed mobility needs Silver Priority - overcrowding Silver Priority - demolition or disposal Silver Priority - exceptional housing need
Under-occupation	Silver Priority - Under Occupation

* Unmet housing need takes account of both individual household circumstances and the other housing options that may be available.

4.4 Due to the limited supply of available homes, eligibility criteria apply to the Choice categories. This includes Silver priority for homelessness where households have to have been assessed as statutorily homeless and Gold priority that is awarded following an assessment of the household mobility needs. Overcrowding priority is awarded automatically based on household circumstances on the EdIndex application but is subject to verification by landlords prior to an offer of housing being made. Due to the level of demand for social housing this priority is only awarded where households are lacking two or more bedrooms based on the room sharing criteria or they are living in a single bedroom home and have no option but to share a room with a child under 16 years of age. To ensure reasonable preference requirements are maintained the additional waiting time for overcrowding is capped at 12 months. It is recognised that this can make it challenging for overcrowded households to get moves to more suitable homes however removing the cap or extending the additional waiting time accrued would impact on the proportion of lets that would go to other priority groups including homeless households.

4.5 Legislation also sets out what landlords should not take into account when allocating social housing, including the length of time for which an applicant has lived in the landlord's area; income; age other than for certain types of accommodation and rent arrears in defined circumstances. Beyond this landlords' have discretion to develop policies and practices that meet the needs of the

communities in which they operate and in taking allocation decisions within that system.

- 4.6 The regulatory requirements in the SHR Charter includes the outcomes (detail included in Appendix 2) and standards that all social landlords should deliver for their tenants and other customers including households seeking housing. The charter outcomes of direct relevance to allocation policy and practice cover:
- 4.6.1 **equality** in relation to recognition of individual needs and fair treatment;
 - 4.6.2 **communications** and getting access to information on how decisions are made;
 - 4.6.3 **housing options** that covers information to help individual make informed choices as well as helping them sustain their home;
 - 4.6.4 **access to housing** in relation to the application process and information on allocation policies; and
 - 4.6.5 Charter outcomes also cover areas of **homelessness service** including homeless prevention, access to temporary accommodation and advice to help individuals find and sustain a permanent home.
- 4.7 These broad requirements are met in relation to the operation of the common housing register and in the Council policy and practice approach to allocations. Officers maintain regular dialogue with the SHR on the context for allocations in Edinburgh, the continued strong partnership commitments through EdIndex and to ensure improvements in relation to access to housing are delivered in accordance with current legislation, regulatory standards and best practice guidance.

Allocations in Practice

- 4.8 Under the Choice system applicants who are registered on EdIndex can submit up to three bids per week for available homes advertised that meet their households needs. Property adverts include information to help individuals make an informed choice. Once the weekly edition closes, shortlists of eligible interested applicants for each available home are ranked by Gold/Silver priority status and waiting time. This ranking of applications is designed to take account of the high level of housing need and make best use of the limited supply of available social housing in the city. Landlord allocation policies and criteria such as room sharing rules for children, and local lettings restrictions are then applied, and the highest-ranking eligible applicants would normally be offered the home.
- 4.9 Demand is significant for social housing in Edinburgh with an average of over 200 bids being received for each available home. The average time to be housed is of course dependent on a range of factors including any priority status, the homes becoming available that meet the household needs, areas households will consider and any restrictions that may apply. As an example, the average time to get a home in Edinburgh with a Gold priority is around 300 days and with Silver homeless priority it is around 435 days.

- 4.10 Gold and Silver homeless priorities recognise the urgent need for housing and officers work with households with these priorities to provide ongoing advice and support on using the priority to resolve their housing situation. Households with Silver homeless priority are expected to bid for three homes a week that meet their household needs and gold priority households are expected to bid for any homes that become available that may meet their assessed needs. These priority awards are not time limited but may be removed if they are not used reasonably or where an offer of a home that is reasonable and meets the household needs has been refused.
- 4.11 As at the end of January 2021, there were 21,657 applicants registered on EdIndex. Of this 5,693 households have a priority status award due to housing need; 363 households have Gold priority to access specific housing; for the Silver priority awards: 4,132 are households assessed as statutorily homeless, 998 are for overcrowding, 84 for demolition/exceptional need and 116 for under-occupation.
- 4.12 Access to housing and allocations are monitored closely to ensure good outcomes for households across the reasonable preference categories, compliance with allocation policy and to ensure capacity for households to move to meet changing housing need. It is also important to maintain flexibility to respond to urgent housing need especially where household may be more vulnerable and/or have complex circumstances that may include a requirement for accessible housing. This is covered in the allocation policy through the award of exceptional need silver priority or a direct allocation where this is necessary.
- 4.13 During 2019/20, 72% of Council homes were let to homeless households, 13% to households with gold priority, 5% to other categories of silver priority and 10% to waiting time. The waiting time category are EdIndex applicants that do not qualify for any priority under the allocation policy but have waiting time added to their application for each day they are registered. Waiting time lets cover a range of circumstances including certain urgent management transfers, applicants with long waiting times, a proportion of lets were advertised with a preference for existing tenants in line with the agreed policy for initial lets of new build Council homes and lets where additional criteria apply such as sheltered housing. As an example, during 2019/20 19% of waiting time lets were for sheltered or dispersed alarm properties.

Accessible Housing Needs

- 4.14 Identifying suitable housing solutions for individuals who require accessible housing within the areas of the city they wish to live can be complex. The Council housing service and partner landlords work closely with Health and Social Care services and support agencies to seek to address any potential barriers that may arise and to ensure good outcomes for households. Finding suitable housing that can be sustained requires any ongoing care and support needs to also be taken into account.
- 4.15 The Home Accessibility Referral Team (HART) can award Gold priority where a household has mobility issues and their existing home cannot be adapted to meet

their assessed housing needs. The approach to Gold priority takes account of individual assessed needs, the suitability of properties and where adaptations such as ramps, wet floor showers or stairlifts are required to make the homes accessible. Accessibility needs can be met in homes designed to an accessible standard or in homes where adaptations have already been or can be carried out.

- 4.16 Applicants with mobility issues who have a need for accessible housing can also bid on mainstream ground floor accommodation or properties with lifts where this has been assessed as appropriate. Information will be included in adverts for homes where there are services such as lifts, existing adaptations such as wet floor showers or where there may be steps to access properties to help applicants decide if they may be suitable for their needs. Finding suitable homes for applicants with mobility needs is very dependent on the individual household needs and ongoing support is provided for applicants through their case officer in HART. Decisions on the suitability of homes will be based on an assessment of the individual household needs and the specific property being considered. Where a property assessment is needed to confirm the suitability of homes for individual needs and any adaptations that may be required to ensure the homes are accessible this is carried out by an Occupational Therapist. Adaptations may not always be possible however due to steep inclines/external steps to homes, restricted internal layouts and inability to fit a wet floor shower etc. Around 30-40% of households require adaptations to meet enable them to make full use of their homes. During 2019/20 £925,472 of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding was spent on adaptations in Council homes.
- 4.17 The Council allocation policy for sheltered housing sets out that that preference is given to households over 55 or where a member of the household has a need for this type of accommodation. Younger individuals with a life-long or progressive medical condition or who have a need more accessible housing due to restricted mobility will also be considered. Flexibility is also applied where properties may be suitable for families where for example a child has a disability, but the household does not currently need visiting support or the alarm service. The Council's stock of sheltered housing has however been developed over many years and not all homes within sheltered developments are accessible without adaptations due to homes being accessed via stairs e.g. Moira Park.
- 4.18 Urgent Gold priority is awarded to assist with delayed hospital discharge for households who are unable to return to their previous home as it no longer meets their needs (e.g. following a leg amputation). This is managed through the hospital outreach officer within HART. Applicants with an Urgent Gold priority would be ranked at the top of any shortlist for eligible homes bid for through Choice. A referral process is also in place with the partner landlords to identify potentially suitable properties ahead of these being advertised to allow for a planned move on for these households and early assessments can be made on the suitability of properties and to initiate any adaptations required. During 2020 there were 47 Urgent Gold cases. 30 households have been successfully housed; a further three moves are being finalised; 10 households are still being supported to find a home; two households moved on into a care home and two households are now

deceased. There are also two step-down properties available to assist delayed discharge as an interim stage between hospital and the allocation of a permanent home. Three households have been moved on successfully to permanent homes through these properties during the last year.

Complex and Exceptional Housing Need

- 4.19 The Council works alongside partner landlords to ensure that the process of applying for a home is as simple and straightforward as possible. Silver priority for exceptional need can be awarded to allow a household to bid for suitable homes where there is an identified need for the household to move that is not covered by the other priority categories but there is not an urgent need for a move or an immediate risk to the household. This priority is not time limited, but households will be expected to bid regularly for available homes and where appropriate consider alternative housing options such as existing Council or partner landlord tenants, registering on the free online service for a potential mutual exchange. The reality is that moves can take time especially where households may have specific preferences on areas or types of properties they will consider. Like overcrowding priority, any change to the level of priority for exceptional housing need would impact on other priority groups. In response to points 5 and 6 in the approved motion, actions to improve the current processes for management of cases, the routes for escalation and potential options to revise the operation of the priority/waiting time for urgent cases are being taken forward in conjunction with key stakeholders.
- 4.20 For complex and/or urgent circumstances, such as where there is a risk of harm to individuals or households, resolving housing needs may at times be managed through alternative holistic approaches. This is especially important where households may be vulnerable and or are in housing crisis and may as a result experience potential barriers such as not being clear on roles and support being provided from different services, understanding what housing may be available and making decisions on potential moves during challenging personal times. Exceptional housing need is not defined within the allocation policy to ensure flexibility to respond to any circumstances that arise but it may include, for example, traumatic life events making it unreasonable for someone to remain in their current home; risk arising from incidents that means a household needs to move to a different area of the city; family household needs due to behavioural conditions of children; prevention of serious harassment or abuse, and child protection. This is not an exhaustive list but is indicative of the circumstances that local housing managers and other services are required to respond to as these needs arise.
- 4.21 Managing exceptional need requires balancing local responsiveness to individual cases against a more central approach, potentially involving a range of services with competing demands, including those from out with the Council. Progressive practice has developed from officers' experience of managing complex cases with critical time requirements, for example, early intervention prison outreach, hospital discharge as set out in section 4.18, Domestic Abuse Housing Policy developed with partner landlords and other key stakeholders and care leaver pathways

supported through the agreed Care Leaver Protocol. Under this protocol care leavers are awarded exceptional housing need priority and individuals are supported by the Throughcare and Aftercare team to create a pathway plan that includes housing. Work is also ongoing currently with the NHS to continue to refine the existing successful approach to supporting hospital discharges to consider how more acute cases that can be difficult to accommodate can be planned for more effectively.

- 4.22 Positive developments have also taken place over the last year with regard to assisting homeless patients at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital (REH) to access suitable accommodation upon discharge. This has involved an outreach worker from The Access Point being allocated to the REH to work with primary care staff to establish housing needs, and optimum pathways when patients are ready to leave. Support is also provided to patients who may have concerns around losing their current accommodation to assist them to sustain their home where appropriate, or to help them access accommodation (either temporary or permanent) that meets care, support and health needs within the community. Further work around supporting patients leaving the RHE is being taken forward in collaboration with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Lothian. This will consider any potential or emerging barriers and how individuals can best be supported to move back into communities.
- 4.23 The Council policy and the regulatory framework allows for direct allocations or moves known as 'management transfers'. This flexibility can, at times, be used to identify homes at short notice for either permanent or temporary moves where tenants or a member of their household is at known or potential risk of harm. Existing tenants may also need to be decanted on a temporary basis to an alternative home, for example, if a property is unsafe; or where repairs will take a long time to complete and circumstances mean it is not reasonable for households to remain in their home; or to resolve a serious housing management problem.
- 4.24 Decisions on direct allocations are authorised by the locality Housing Operations Manager and are led through to resolution by the Team Leaders. Identifying potential properties and managing demand where households have similar needs may be managed within individual localities or across localities and partner landlords where required. Cases may be escalated to a case management approach where required, for example, where a move becomes more urgent due to changes in circumstances or further information may become known. Looking at the feasibility of utilising the IT systems to improve the management of multiple exceptional and urgent cases and to monitor outcomes has been identified as an improvement action in section 4.28.
- 4.25 As well as the award of silver priority for non-urgent exceptional cases there are a number of pathways in place to deal with exceptional housing needs and to case manage households with complex circumstances, many of whom will be potentially vulnerable, covering areas such as Offender Management and Adult Support and Protection. A need for a move to alternative housing can be identified through wider Council or partner agency involvement with individuals or households. A case

management approach seeks to ensure full account is taken of all the relevant household circumstances in identifying potential solutions. This can include any specific household needs, where there are restrictions on where individuals can be housed, where a sensitive lettings approach may be appropriate, managing known risks and to identify ongoing support that may be required to help individuals sustain their tenancy. Case management meetings that are integral to these processes involve senior experienced staff who have the expertise and authority to make decisions as required.

- 4.26 An overview of how the pathways for households with specific circumstances sit alongside local managers responsibilities in responding to individual urgent cases and within the overall allocation framework is provided in Appendix 3.
- 4.27 It is also recognised that it is essential that we engage with key stakeholders on an ongoing basis to identify any barriers people are facing and to assist people with a range of challenges to ensure they receive every assistance to access suitable housing at times of crisis or risk. This is also important as we take forward work to implement changes to the application process and in advice and information available to applicants.

Reducing Barriers for vulnerable people

- 4.28 Engagement with key stakeholders is underway to identify other potential or emerging barriers and to look at options to improve process and outcomes across the range of needs to be met within the context of significant high demand. Account will be taken of households who may be vulnerable due to multiple and or complex needs, are in crisis or who may be at risk of harm. Actions are being proposed in the interim to maintain transparency, to try and manage demand fairly where households have similar needs for homes and to ensure effective support and communications with households/their representatives. The actions being proposed include;
 - 4.28.1 Looking at the feasibility of using the core Northgate Housing Management system to better manage multiple exceptional housing need cases including management transfers;
 - 4.28.2 Assigning a lead officer for these households who would be responsible for ensuring effective co-ordination with all parties involved within and out with the Council such as partner landlords. The lead officer would be dependent on the individual household circumstances and any existing support relationships that may already exist;
 - 4.28.3 Developing a clear statement of approach and procedures/training for staff to ensure a consistency in overall approach in managing complex and urgent need cases while maintaining the flexibility necessary to respond effectively to individual cases in particular where households are potentially vulnerable;
 - 4.28.4 Engaging with key stakeholders to review the current processes and the operation of priority for exceptional cases; and

4.28.5 Developing proposals for a revised process for the escalation of cases not resolved within the allocation policy framework or existing processes/multi-agency approach to identify solutions and to make decisions on cases where necessary to ensure good outcomes.

Other Improvement Actions

- 4.29 A number of actions have also been identified to further improve the information and application process for households seeking housing in Edinburgh and to upgrade the IT systems and digital services available.
- 4.30 A new EdIndex website went live at the end of January 2021. As well as providing information on how to apply for social housing and other affordable housing options this now also provides a new 'tool' that allows people to view details of where houses became available and the level of demand for them over the preceding 12 months. This will enable applicants to have a clearer picture of the supply and demand for homes and aims to help people make a more informed choice about their housing options. An 'accessibility tool' is also being explored to assist applicants with specific needs such as visual impairment or where English is not their first language through 'read aloud' and translation functionality. Work is also being proposed to develop a dedicated page for applicants to get information on and see available Mid Market Rent homes.
- 4.31 IT software upgrades are also planned that will support the implementation of an upgrade to the Choice system; this includes the implementation of an on-line EdIndex housing application. Once this work is completed applicants will get a secure individual log-in to the on-line portal, will be able to view and update their application with any changes in their household circumstances. They will also be able to view their own bidding history. An integral element of this work will be to identify any additional support that may be necessary to ensure all applicants including those with specific needs or who are vulnerable can use and access the application and choice process as required.
- 4.32 The next phase of the project scheduled following implementation of the on-line application, is the development and implementation of an on-line housing options checker. This will direct applicants to information on potential housing options dependent on their individual household circumstances.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Actions to improve the information and application process for households seeking housing in Edinburgh and to upgrade the IT systems and digital services available will be taken forward with the partner landlords.
- 5.2 If agreed by Committee Interim actions set out in section 4.28 will be implemented.
- 5.3 An update on the outcome of engagement with key stakeholders and recommendations on any revised proposals for the escalation of exceptional need cases will be presented to Committee.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The investment required to make the necessary improvements to the IT systems and digital services available have been factored into the HRA business plan and will be reviewed annually. This funding includes around £0.26m from the contribution of the partner landlords towards the operation of the common housing register.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are no adverse stakeholder/community impact implications arising from this report.
- 7.2 The strong partnership through EdIndex continues to be successful in assisting households looking to access social housing in the city. This supports pathways for households with specific housing need such as hospital discharge referrals, Housing First and providing homes for temporary accommodation. EdIndex partner landlords are currently working together to develop the next EdIndex Business Plan for 2021-2024, which will include improvement actions on advice and information, processes and managing cases of exceptional housing need.
- 7.3 Work is ongoing with Edinburgh Tenants Federation to develop a Tenant Scrutiny Framework that will support the delivery of the Tenant Participation Strategy objectives. This will set out the range of ways housing services engage with tenants and how this can influence decisions on services including allocations and the experience of moving into new homes. The remit of one of the regular working groups with tenants is being broadened to cover service improvement activity. This will provide an additional forum for tenants to provide feedback and test improvements before they are rolled out. A planned programme of tenant focus groups this year will also cover a range of different topics and hear from different tenants across the city.
- 7.4 The Council's SHR Landlord [Performance Report](#), [Engagement Plan](#) and [Assurance Statement](#) are available online.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Housing Service Improvement Plan: update](#)
- 8.2 [The City of Edinburgh Council's Assurance Statement on Housing Services](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Motion to Full Council on Allocations Agreed by Full Council on 4 February 2021.
- 9.2 Appendix 2- Scottish Housing Regulator Outcomes relevant to Allocations.
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – Overview of Complex and Exceptional Need Framework .

Appendix 1

By Councillor Kate Campbell - Allocation Policy

'Notes that a report on Allocations policy is due to the next Housing Homelessness and Fair work committee and agrees the report will include:

- 1) An analysis of the Scottish Housing Regulator requirements on allocations and our compliance with those policies.
- 2) A detailed appraisal of how homes are allocated to people with specific housing needs and particularly how accessible homes are allocated to ensure that they are allocated to those who have accessibility requirements.
- 3) An analysis of our policies around exceptional need and how we are meeting the housing needs of exceptionally vulnerable groups, including but not limited to how we meet our own policies on housing for people who have experienced domestic abuse and care experienced young people.
- 4) Identify areas where vulnerable people may be experiencing additional barriers to access to housing or where processes could be improved to ensure outcomes are met.
- 5) Identify additional actions that we could take to ensure that those barriers are reduced and that there are pathways for people who are at risk, including processes around management transfers.
- 6) Requests officers examine the case for a robust escalation route for cases of exceptional need, including multi-agency and interdepartmental working to ensure that checks and balances are in place, and that we remain transparent and fair in our allocations policy, but that where there is urgent need because of risk of harm we have a process for ensuring that housing needs are met.'

Appendix 2

Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes are of direct relevance to allocation policy and practice:

Equality

- Outcome 1: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Communication

- Outcome 2: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Participation

- Outcome 3: Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Housing options

- Outcome 7: People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.
- Outcome 8: Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
- Outcome 9: People at risk of losing their home get advice on preventing homelessness.

Access to social housing

- Outcome 10: People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Tenancy sustainment

- Outcome 11: Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

Homeless people

- Outcome 12: Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

Complex Cases Overview....

