

Choice Based Lettings Policy

Introduction

The Council transferred its housing stock to North Norfolk Housing Trust (now Victory Housing Trust) in February 2006. The allocation of properties is the responsibility of the landlord and therefore the Council no longer has a remit to allocate properties. However the Council now has nomination rights to the housing stock it transferred to Victory Housing Trust along with nomination rights to housing stock in North Norfolk owned by other housing associations (appendix 1) and any new affordable housing developed in the area. The level of nomination rights varies from between 50% and 100% of vacancies. The Council also has nomination rights to Newbuild HomeBuy properties (shared ownership).

The Housing Act 1996 Part VI (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) requires the Council has to have a scheme which determines how such nominations will be made. The new scheme, the Choice Based Lettings Policy is outlined on page 3.

The purpose of the Council's Choice Based Lettings Policy is to set out clear guidelines to ensure that affordable housing is allocated fairly and according to applicants' need for housing while at the same time taking into account effective management of the affordable housing stock in the district.

The Council holds a Housing Register of those wanting to be considered for affordable housing in North Norfolk from which nominations are made. There were around 2500 applicants on the Housing Register at 1 January 2009. The Housing Register allows households to be considered for properties owned by a number of Housing Associations. Only a few Housing Associations hold their own waiting lists for properties in North Norfolk which are not subject to

nomination rights and these properties tend to be suitable for elderly households only.

Victory Housing Trust and the other housing associations can allocate properties which are not subject to nomination rights in accordance with their own allocations policy but may alternatively ask the Council to find a tenant for these properties, these requests are called referrals. The Council will encourage all Housing Associations to include all their properties in the Choice Based Lettings scheme whether they are subject to nomination rights or not.

The Council receives between 300-400 nomination and referral requests a year. The majority of applicants on the Housing Register therefore will not be nominated or referred for a vacancy. It is important therefore that the Choice Based Lettings Policy is able to clearly identify those in the greatest housing need and minimises the level of time taken to assess applicants that are not going to receive active consideration for vacancies. This will free up time for the Council to offer a more comprehensive housing advice and options service to help applicants find housing.

The Council and its partner Housing Associations have introduced Your Choice Your Home. This is a Choice Based Lettings scheme which means that Housing Association vacant properties in the district are advertised and Housing Register applicants are able to bid (express an interest) for a property they are interested in. The bidder with the highest level of priority, which is determined by the band in which the applicant is placed on the Housing Register and the amount of time in that band or on the Housing Register, is allocated the property. If an applicant does not bid for a property they can not be considered for it (in certain circumstances bids can be made for a property on behalf of an applicant).

Choice Based Lettings Policy

The Choice Based Lettings Policy has 5 bands which have been numbered 1 to 5 and an Emergency Card. Applicants with the highest level of need will be placed into Band 1 and applicants in the lowest level of need will be placed into Band 5. The Emergency Card will only be issued to those applicants with a proven urgent need to move immediately or in the following 6 weeks.

The Housing Act 1996, Part VI requires that the Council through the Choice Based Lettings Policy gives 'reasonable preference' to certain categories of housing need. All of the reasonable preference categories have been included in Bands 1 and 2 (appendix 2). Bands 3 and 4 includes applicants with a medium level of housing need. Band 5 includes applicants with a low level of housing need and also includes those applicants that the Housing Act allows a lower level of priority to be given to regardless of their level of housing need.

The Housing Act allows additional priority to be given to applicants with a local connection to the area. A local connection is defined under the homelessness provisions (s199) of the Housing Act 1996. A household will have a connection to North Norfolk if they have lived in the North Norfolk District Council area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years. They will also have a connection to North Norfolk if they work in the district or have a family member who has lived in the district for the past 5 years. The homelessness provisions definition will be used for determining whether an applicant has a connection to North Norfolk or not. The additional priority however, cannot override the reasonable preference categories i.e. an applicant with a low level of housing need with a local connection cannot override an applicant with a high level of housing need without a local connection. Connection to North Norfolk along with the amount of time an applicant has had an Emergency Card or been in Bands 1 or 2 or length of time on the housing register will be used to determine priority

between two applicants who have the same level of housing need (in the same band or both have an Emergency Card).

The level of housing need included in each of the bands is detailed below. Additional guidance and explanatory notes relating to the banding are contained in Appendix 2.

Emergency Card

The Emergency Card will only be issued to applicants who have a proven urgent need to move immediately or within a period of 6 weeks. Examples of when the Emergency Card could be issued are:

- An applicant who is in hospital awaiting discharge but can not leave as they do not have a property available to them which is suitable for their medical and other needs.
- An applicant is suffering severe harassment (including domestic violence) and there is an immediate risk of harm.
- A Housing Association tenant needs to be moved urgently so their property can be repaired, modernised or redeveloped.

The Emergency Card will be valid for 6 weeks. If after 6 weeks the applicant has not successfully bid for a property, their entitlement to the Emergency Card will be reviewed, the Emergency Card will then either be removed or the period it can be used for extended.

Band 1

- Households accepted as homeless (full duty)
- Households meeting 2 or more of the following:
 - In insanitary housing
 - In overcrowded housing
 - In otherwise unsatisfactory housing
 - Need to move on medical grounds
 - Need to move on welfare grounds

- Need to move to a particular locality to prevent hardship occurring
- Households threatened with homelessness within 28 days and likely to be accepted (full duty)
- Households for which the Council has a duty to re-house under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976
- Housing Association tenants living in North Norfolk who are under-occupying their property by 1 or more bedrooms.

Band 2

- Households meeting one of the following criteria:
 - In insanitary housing
 - In overcrowded housing
 - In otherwise unsatisfactory housing
 - Need to move on medical grounds
 - Need to move on welfare grounds
 - Need to move to a particular locality to prevent hardship occurring
- Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days but who have not been and who are unlikely to be accepted
- Households accepted as homeless but without a local connection and who have been referred to another area.

Band 3

Households likely to become homeless within 2 months and likely to be accepted as homeless (full duty)

Households who have 2 or more unsatisfactory housing circumstances which have an effect on the household i.e. living in overcrowded circumstances (lacking at least one bedroom), sharing facilities, living in insecure housing, lack of stability in housing history.

Band 4

Households who have one unsatisfactory housing circumstance which has an effect on the household i.e. living in overcrowded circumstances (lacking at least one bedroom), sharing facilities, living in insecure housing, lack of stability in housing history.

Band 5

All other housing circumstances and

- Households who would otherwise be included in a higher band or who have been demoted from a higher band because:
 - it is considered that they have the financial resources to meet their own housing needs
 - it is considered that they were unsuitable to be a tenant at the time of application but where it is not considered appropriate to exclude from the register
 - it is considered that they have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances
 - corrective action can be taken by the household to improve their housing circumstances but the household is unwilling to take this action
 - the homelessness duty has been discharged through having made a reasonable offer of accommodation which has been refused
 - the applicant is under 18 and is not being considered under the Norfolk Joint Protocol for Young Homeless Persons and Care Leavers
 - they are in supported housing but are not ready to move onto independent living.

Property Eligibility

It is considered that a household normally requires the following to accommodate permanent members of its household:

- A bedroom per single adult or couple
- A bedroom for 2 children under the age of 10

The size of the bedroom will be taken in consideration when determining how many household members it can accommodate.

Subject to stock availability households with access to children will be allowed to bid for family sized properties.

The Council will seek where possible to ensure that all household types receive equal consideration for available properties and that bidding opportunities are proportionate to the household composition on the housing list. This might mean that if there is a higher proportion of single person or couple households on the list but only a small number of one bedroom properties that these households are able to bid for some or all two bedroom properties. This might also result in smaller households being able to bid for three bedroom properties. The number and type of properties let will be regularly compared to the number and type of households registered on the housing list. Information on when more flexibility is allowed as to what types of property a household can bid for will be available on the Council's website and will be updated at least every six months. Adverts for properties will clearly state which types of household are eligible to bid for a property. Each landlord may have additional eligibility criteria for their properties and adverts for properties will clearly state which types of households are eligible to bid for a property.

Certain categories of applicant may be preferred for particular types of accommodation to assist in developing mixed and sustainable communities. For example, some streets may have a high number of children and smaller families or single people and couples might therefore be able to bid for a vacancy.

Applicants requiring night time care will be considered for an additional bedroom over the requirement for the permanent members of the household. The

requirement for night time care will have to be independently verified. If it is considered that the household can have an extra bedroom they will be notified of this on joining the Housing Register.

Applicants however, might not be able to bid for certain types of property even though this might be their choice. Applicants will be notified of the types of property they will be able to bid for on joining the Housing Register which will allow the applicant to amend their choice of property in order to maximise their chances of bidding successfully. Any changes to the types of property for which applicants will be able to bid for will be detailed on the Council's website.

Choice

Applicants can choose to bid for a property in any location they like. The Housing Register asks the applicant to identify which areas they want to be rehoused in, applicants who are accepted onto the register will be notified of the types of accommodation that currently exist in their chosen locations on joining the Housing Register. This information will also be available on the Council's website and will be updated annually to reflect changes in stock due to the Right to Buy and new developments.

Advertising Vacant Properties

Housing Associations will advertise the vacant properties they have for rent and for Newbuild HomeBuy¹. The adverts will provide the following information:

- Location of property
- Type of property, including number of bedrooms
- Rent costs
- Whether the property has a garden and parking
- Any age restriction
- Whether the property is supported housing or sheltered housing

¹ NewBuild HomeBuy is also known as shared ownership

- Whether there are any restrictions on who is eligible to bid for the property, i.e. which types of household can bid, whether the property is restricted to tenants, whether the property is subject to local lettings.

Adverts

Details of all the properties available to bid on will be available on the Your Choice Your Home website. Copies of the adverts will also be distributed as widely as possible and as a minimum will be available to view at the following locations:

- North Norfolk District Council offices
- Offices of Housing Associations
- Libraries

Details of all other locations where copies of the adverts can be viewed will be listed on the Your Choice Your Home website and at the Council's offices.

The bidding process

Applicants will have at least one full week from the date of the advert to bid for the properties they are interested in. There will be no limit on the number of bids an applicant can make. The advert will clearly show the date and time that bidding closes.

Bids can be made using the Your Choice Your Home website. Details of other ways bids can be made are detailed in the scheme user guide.

The Your Choice Your Home scheme user guide provides a step by step guide to making a bid.

Help with bidding

Some applicants may need support or help to make bids, the Council will therefore keep a list of applicants who need support or help making a bid. The assistance available to applicants is:

- Sending the applicant details of properties they may be interested in bidding for. This may be needed as the applicant does not have access to a computer and is unable to access any of the offices where the adverts are displayed.
- A support worker can bid for properties on an applicants behalf.
- The Council's Housing Options team can bid for a property on an applicant's behalf.

Bid monitoring

The Council will monitor bids to ensure that all applicants in the higher Bands and vulnerable applicants are making bids.

Those accepted as homeless and in Band 1 will have 6 weeks to bid for properties of their choice. If a household has not made bids for advertised properties in their areas of choice the Council will start to bid for suitable properties on their behalf this may include bidding for properties which are outside of their area of choice if the applicant has been particularly restrictive in their choice of area or where there is limited stock availability in their choice of areas. Reasonable efforts will be made to take account of applicant's aspirations when making bids on behalf of clients. If a bid is made and the bid is successful, the applicant will be offered the property as an offer of suitable accommodation in order to discharge the duty under the homelessness legislation. The applicant can appeal against the offer of accommodation and the decision to discharge the homelessness duty. It is recommended that where an applicant intends to appeal against the suitability of the accommodation and the discharge of the homelessness duty that they accept the property offered whilst they make their appeal. The appeal would be heard by the Council's Judicial Board and if the decision is upheld the applicant would be advised of their right to apply to the County Court to review the decision. If the appeal is successful the applicant will be able to bid for an alternative property.

If it is found that a vulnerable applicant is not bidding for properties in their areas of choice, they will be contacted to ensure that they understand that they need to bid, how to bid and if necessary assistance with bidding will be provided.

How the successful bidder will be identified

When bidding closes a shortlist of those bidding will be generated, applicants in the highest band will be given first consideration. An applicant with a connection to North Norfolk will appear on the shortlist above an applicant in the same band but without connection to North Norfolk. If there are two applicants in the same band and both have a connection to North Norfolk, priority will be given to the applicant who has had an Emergency Card, been in the band (Bands 1 and 2) or on the register (Bands 3, 4 and 5) for the longest period of time.

In some villages new affordable homes have been provided as part of Exception Housing Schemes. These homes will be occupied in accordance with the North Norfolk Local Lettings Agreement (appendix 4) which gives priority to households who have a local connection to the parish in which the homes have been built and the adjoining parishes irrespective of which band an applicant is in on the Housing Register. Priority is given to households who have the longest local connection. When a property on an Exception Housing Scheme is vacant the advert will state that households with a local connection will be prioritised for the property. This means that whilst a household without a local connection to the parish or adjoining parish can bid for the property, those bidders with a local connection will be prioritised for the property over those without.

Relevant Date

The relevant date for determining priority between two applicants will be the date the applicant was issued with an Emergency Card or was placed in Band 1 or 2 or for Bands 3, 4 and 5 the date they joined the Housing Register.

Shortlisting

All applicants who bid for a property will after bidding has closed be placed on a shortlist in order of priority. The Housing Association partners or Council will then use the shortlist to decide who is offered the property, this will generally be the applicant at the top of the list.

Housing Associations' reserve the right to carry out an assessment of the applicant's eligibility for the property they have bid for before making an offer. If the Housing Association decides that the applicant is not eligible for the property they will explain why. If the applicant is not happy with the decision made by the Housing Association partner they can make a formal complaint to the Housing Association and this will be resolved through the Housing Association's own complaints procedure. If an applicant is not considered eligible, the next applicant on the shortlist will then be considered.

The Housing Associations will make all reasonable efforts to contact the applicant including writing to the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they keep the Council informed of their correct contact details.

Applicants who are at the top of the shortlist of more than one property will be contacted and given the opportunity to view all the properties they have successfully bid on before they have to decide which, if any, property they accept.

Making an offer

In most cases the Housing Associations will be making offers direct to applicants for the properties they advertise through the Choice Based Lettings system.

The Council may however still provide nominations to Housing Associations who are not partners within the scheme. Where the Council provides a nomination to a housing association only one name will be provided. The housing association will consider the suitability of the nominee and in most cases will allocate the

property to the nominee. The decision on suitability will be made on both the suitability of the nominee to be a tenant and on the suitability of the property for the nominee's needs.

In cases where the nominee is considered to be unsuitable the housing association will notify the Council of its decision along with the reasons for believing the tenant to be unsuitable and will request another nomination. The Council may challenge the decision of the housing association. Where this cannot be resolved at officer level the matter will be referred to the Council's Strategic Housing Manager and equivalent at the housing association to be resolved.

Applicants will be given a reasonable period to consider an offer of accommodation which will be not more than 7 days. If the applicant wants to refuse the offer and they are owed a full homeless duty they should contact the Council at the earliest opportunity who will notify the applicant of any consequences of refusing the offer. The applicant will be notified of any appeal process should as a result of refusing a property their application be demoted (placed in Band 5).

Applicants will be given reasonable notice of the start date of the tenancy following their acceptance of the property.

Tenant Only Adverts

Some properties will be advertised with a restriction that only tenants of Housing Associations who live in the North Norfolk District Council area can bid for the property. This is to promote mobility for Housing Association tenants and to ensure that the most appropriate use of the Housing Association rented stock in North Norfolk is made.

Up to 20% of all properties let through Your Choice Your Home will be tenant only adverts. The percentage of properties restricted to tenants will be monitored and may be increased or decreased as necessary.

Direct Lettings

Occasionally it will be necessary to let a property without advertising it, this is called a Direct Letting. Direct Lettings will only be used when there is a proven need to house a particular household quickly. Examples of a Direct Letting are:

- where a vacancy suitable for an applicant with an Emergency Card or in Band 1 or 2 is created by offering a move to an existing Housing Association tenant on the Housing Register. This may be considered where there have been no properties advertised for a period of 2 months that would be suitable for the applicant in Band 1 or 2 or who has an Emergency Card
- when a Housing Association tenant who must move to allow work to be carried out to their current home has been given an Emergency Card but has not been able to successfully bid for a property that is suitable for them.
- when the property which would otherwise be advertised needs to be let in a sensitive manner due to historic problems such as anti-social behaviour in the immediate area.

When a Direct Letting is made the Council or housing association will contact the tenant directly to offer them a move. Only a very small number of properties will be let as Direct Lettings. The percentage of properties let as Direct Lettings will be monitored to ensure they only represent a small percentage of the total number of properties let,

Feedback

Feedback will be provided on the Your Choice Your Home website and as part of adverts. The feedback will include:

- The location of the property
- Number of bids
- Band of the successful bidder
- Whether the applicant has a connection to North Norfolk
- Relevant date of the successful bidder.

No personal details will be provided for the successful bidder as part of feedback.

At least once a year feedback will also be provided on the number of properties let through Direct Lettings and the number of properties let by band and Emergency Card.

Supported Housing and Sheltered Housing

All applicants bidding for supported or sheltered housing will need to demonstrate a need for the support provided within the accommodation. Please contact the Housing Options team for more information.

Vacancies for Extra Care Housing (also known as Frail Elderly or Housing with Care) will not be advertised. All vacancies will be let directly from the Housing Register. All applicants for Extra Care Housing will undergo an assessment of their needs by Norfolk Social Services prior to acceptance on to the Housing Register.

In some cases, vacancies in supported housing schemes will be not be advertised, this will be where any tenant of the scheme must have particular support needs.

Support called 'floating support' can also be provided to households regardless of where they live. Such support can be provided through the HomeStay scheme delivered by Stonham Housing Association. The Council and prospective landlords retain the right to insist that appropriate support is provided to those

requiring support prior to a tenancy being allocated through the Housing Register.

Under 18's

Applicants under 18 are considered to be children and will not therefore be nominated for supported housing or for an independent tenancy outside of the Joint Protocol for Young Homeless People and Care Leavers. Housing Associations are likely to insist on the provision of appropriate support to those under 18 prior to the allocation of an independent tenancy and may also require that an appropriate adult or agency act as guarantor for the young person.

Lone teenage parents under 18 will not be allocated an independent tenancy without appropriate support being in place.

Other Options

HomeBuy

HomeBuy is a range of low-cost home ownership products designed to assist people in getting a foot on to the property ladder.

Newbuild HomeBuy (also known as shared ownership) is available in North Norfolk and occasionally there will be opportunities to buy shared ownership properties on re-sale. The initial share in a property that can be bought will vary from as little as 10% up to 80% and the amount of mortgage and rent will therefore vary.

Newbuild HomeBuy properties will be advertised in the same way as rented properties. Any applicant interested in purchasing a property must be registered on the Housing Register in order to bid for a property. Applicants are however encouraged to also register with the HomeBuy Agent for Norfolk and Suffolk as they will look at an applicant's income and expenditure and advise them of the

HomeBuy products that will be suited to their circumstances. The HomeBuy agent can also provide details of properties available in other parts of Norfolk.

Any applicant interested in HomeBuy will be assessed for the Housing Register in the same way as other applicants. To have a successful bid for a Newbuild HomeBuy property the applicant will have to meet the criteria for the individual scheme and have the level of income or capital to purchase the available share. An applicant's level of debt will affect their ability to buy under the HomeBuy scheme.

Private Rented Properties

It is intended that the Your Choice Your Home scheme will be expanded to include private rented properties. Private landlords will then be offered the opportunity to advertise suitable properties through Your Choice Your Home.

Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is where a tenant of a Housing Association or Local Authority swap homes. A mutual exchange can be a quicker way to get a move to the property of the type and location that is preferred than through the Housing Register. Housing Association and Local Authority tenants may have a right to carry out a mutual exchange subject to their landlords consent (although consent can only be withheld for a specified number of reasons). Any tenant interested in this scheme should contact their landlord to discuss the options available.

Publicity of the Scheme

The Council will publicise the Your Choice Your Home scheme through the Council's website (www.northnorfolk.org), through the scheme website (www.yourchoiceyourhome.org.uk) and through partnership with Housing Associations and statutory and voluntary organisations. The launch of the scheme will be widely publicised through the Council's newsletter Outlook, through the media and through Road Shows held in towns across North Norfolk.

Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to ensuring equality and the promotion of diversity and will seek to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnic origin, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken of the Choice Based Lettings Policy and regular monitoring of the Your Choice Your Home scheme will be undertaken to ensure its fair implementation.

Monitoring of the policy

The Council will undertake regular monitoring of the Your Choice Your Home scheme, the information gathered will inform an annual review of the Your Choice Your Home scheme and the North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy. This monitoring will ensure that the Your Choice Your Home scheme and the North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy will at all times be used proportionately in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Council will consult with its Housing Association partners and other stakeholders on any proposed changes to the Your Choice Your Home scheme or the North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy and will notify applicants on the Housing Register of any significant changes to the Your Choice Your Home scheme or the North Norfolk Choice Based Lettings Policy.

April 2009

Appendix 1

Housing Associations with housing in North Norfolk

Broadland Housing Association

Cotman Housing Association

English Churches Housing Group

Guinness Trust

Hanover Housing Association

Hastoe Housing Association

Housing 21

Livability Housing (formerly John Grooms Housing Association)

Orbit East

Peddars Way Housing Association

Places for People

Riverside Housing

Suffolk Heritage Housing Association

Victory Housing Trust

Wherry Housing Association

Appendix 2

Additional guidance and explanatory notes for banding

Households accepted as homeless (full duty)

The priority given to households accepted as homeless will be reduced once the homelessness duty has been discharged which could be through making a suitable offer of accommodation following a successful bid which could be made by the Council on behalf of the applicant, even if this is refused.

Households living in

- **In insanitary housing**
- **In overcrowded housing**
- **In otherwise unsatisfactory housing**

These factors will be assessed in accordance with the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System and include properties with Category 1 Hazards as determined by a Technical Officer or equivalent within the Strategic Housing Team (see appendix 3). The Council will take enforcement action to remove the Category 1 hazard and only when this is not possible or practical will the household will be placed in the Band 1 or 2. In cases of overcrowding the Technical Officer will have regard to the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to statutory overcrowding.

Households needing to move on the following grounds;

- **medical grounds**
- **welfare grounds**
- **prevent hardship occurring**

The need to move will have been strongly supported by an appropriate agency i.e. Health, Social Services, Probation, Police, this might be through involvement in a joint assessment or case conference, a letter or report or in exceptional cases a telephone conversation. The agency will be expected to clearly state why re-housing is necessary.

Households threatened with homelessness within 28 days and likely to be accepted (full duty)

The priority given to applicants threatened with homelessness within 28 days and likely to be accepted (full duty) will be reduced once the homelessness duty has been discharged which could be through making a suitable offer of accommodation following a successful bid which could be made by the Council on behalf of the applicant, even if this is refused or alternatively if the threat of homelessness is lifted or homelessness is prevented.

Households for which the Council has a duty to re-house under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976

A farmer requiring possession of accommodation which is required to house an essential agricultural worker can make an application to the Council under the Rent Agriculture Act 1976 to re-house the existing occupant. If accepted the Council has to use its best endeavours to re-house the household occupying the tied accommodation. The Council may seek the advice of the Agricultural Dwelling Advisory Committee to determine whether re-housing of the existing occupant is in the interests of agricultural efficiency and on the urgency of the case. The Council must take full account of the committee's advice and the Council may be required to re-house the occupant within a specified time period. If the farmer has other accommodation which it could use to house the occupant or the essential agricultural worker the application will not be accepted.

If the Council makes an offer of accommodation which is subsequently refused the Council can seek a determination from the County Court on the suitability of

the offer. If the offer is deemed to be suitable the Council's duty under this Act will have been discharged.

The Council will encourage applicants to bid for suitable properties but may make bids on behalf of an applicant to ensure that the Council is able to discharge its statutory duty, the duty may be discharged even if the offer of a property is refused, under these circumstances the priority of the applicant will be reduced.

Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days but who have not been and who are unlikely to be accepted

The Council will work with all applicants who are deemed to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days but who have not been and who are unlikely to be accepted, to secure suitable alternative accommodation. If the applicant does not pursue options that are available and which are considered to be suitable the applicant's priority will be reduced.

Households accepted as homeless but without a connection to North Norfolk and who have been referred to another area

The Council will review the priority awarded to applicants accepted as homeless but without a local connection and who have been referred to another area once the outcome of the referral is known.

Extreme harassment

Applicants experiencing extreme harassment will be either assessed under the Homelessness Legislation, given an Emergency Card or placed in Band 1 or 2 depending upon the level of harassment. It is considered that extreme harassment will either result in a need to move on medical or welfare grounds or a need to move to a particular locality to prevent hardship occurring or a combination of these.

Overcrowding

It is considered that a household normally requires the following to accommodate permanent members of its household:

- A bedroom per single adult or couple
- A bedroom for 2 children under the age of 10

The size of the bedroom will be taken in consideration when determining how many household members it can accommodate.

Appendix 3

The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) replaced the Housing Fitness Standard. It evaluates potential risks to the health and safety to the occupant from any deficiencies identified in a property and is concerned with the assessment of hazards in a property. There are 29 possible hazards which are arranged in four main groups reflecting basic health requirements:

- Physiological Requirements – Hygrothermal condition and Pollutants (non-microbial)
- Psychological Requirements – Space, Security, Light and Noise
- Protection against infection – Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply
- Protection against Accidents – Falls, Electrical shock, Burns and Scalds, and Building related collisions.

The HHSRS requires a judgement to be made for each identified hazard in a property including an assessment of:

- the likelihood, over the next twelve months, of an occurrence that could result in harm to any potential occupant, expressed as a ratio; and
- the range of potential outcomes from such an occurrence, expressed as a percentage for each identified harm

A Hazard Score is calculated as the sum of the products of the weightings for each Class of Harm which could result from the particular hazard, multiplied by the likelihood of an occurrence, and multiplied by the set of percentages showing the spread of Harm.

The numerical Hazard Score can then be allocated against the Hazard Bands. There are ten Hazard Bands with Band J being the safest and Band A being the most dangerous. Scores in Bands A to C are classed as Category 1 hazards and scores in Bands D to J are classed as Category 2 hazards. Under the Housing Act 2004 local authorities have a duty to take enforcement action when Category 1 type hazards are found and a discretionary power to take enforcement action in respect of Category 2 hazards.

Appendix 4

North Norfolk Local Lettings Agreement

Properties on Exceptions Housing Schemes will be let to households who have the strongest local connection as determined by the following local connection cascade criteria. How the cascade works is explained at the end of this Appendix.

- (a) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes for a period of at least 3 consecutive years and have a local connection as defined within clauses b - u below.
- (b) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes for at least 12 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (c) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have permanent employment (either full time or part time of at least 10 hours per week) in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes immediately prior to the nomination. Permanent employment is a contract of at least 12 months.

- (d) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes for at least 12 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (e) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent, step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative has been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for at least 12 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (f) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who were previously permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for at least 12 months and who moved away less than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.
- (g) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who was permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for at least 12 months and who moved away less than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.

- (h) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent, step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative was permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for at least 12 months and who moved away less than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.
- (i) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (j) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who immediately prior to the nomination have employment (either full time or part time of at least 10 hours per week) in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes immediately prior to the nomination. Employment is a temporary contract or a permanent contract of less than 12 months.
- (k) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who have been permanently

resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.

- (l) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent, step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative has been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (m) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who were previously permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months and / or moved away more than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.
- (n) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who was permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months and / or who moved away more than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.
- (o) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent,

step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative was permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for more than 6 months and / or who moved away more than 3 years ago immediately prior to the nomination.

- (p) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (q) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (r) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent, step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative has been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name]

or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months immediately prior to the nomination.

- (s) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who were previously permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months.
- (t) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have an immediate relative (parent, child, sibling or grandparent) who was previously permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months.
- (u) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have a relative (step parent, step child, step sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin) where there is a proven close relationship or the need to give or receive support and that relative was previously permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes for less than 6 months.
- (v) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who are permanently resident in North Norfolk immediately prior to the nomination and who have requested accommodation in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes.

- (w) Households who do not have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have been permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes for a period of at least 3 consecutive years and have a local connection as defined within clauses b - u above.
- (x) Households who do not have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who are permanently resident in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjacent civil parishes immediately prior to the nomination.
- (y) Households who have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who have requested accommodation in [Insert Parish Name] or the immediately adjoining civil parishes.
- (z) Households who do not have a housing need as prescribed by the Council's allocation policies and who are permanently resident in Norfolk.

The cascade is in order of priority. The highest local connection is a household who has lived in the parish or adjoining parish for at least 3 consecutive years at any time and is now living in the parish or adjoining parish and has done so for at least 12 months, this is an A and B connection. The second highest local connection is an A and C, then an A and D and so on working down the cascade. If a household has more than one type of local connection, the highest connection in the cascade is used, for example if the household has an A and B and D connection, the A and B connection will be used to determine their priority. Properties will be let to the household which has the highest local connection as determined by the cascade. If there is more than one household with the same

local connection, for example there are 3 households for a property who all have an A and B local connection, the household who has lived in the parish or adjoining parish continuously for the longest time will be selected.