

**Broadland and South Norfolk
Allocations Scheme Policies Additional Guidance**

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1 Introduction and the Application Process

1.1 Introduction

This additional guidance is to support the Housing Allocations Policies for Broadland and South Norfolk Council (from here on referred to as 'the policy', it provides further details of:

- The application process
- The allocations process
- Property identification
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Housing Pathway Model

The application process

The Key Stages



Submission: The application to join the housing register or rent a pitch.

Verification: Confirming and investigating the evidence needed to assess the application

Assessment: Assessing eligibility, qualification, non – qualification, reduced preference, priority need

Notification: Formal notification of the outcome of the assessment of the application

1.2 Submission



The application to join the housing register is online via the Housing portal market place which is located by following the link:

www.southnorfolkandbroadlandhomeoptions.org.uk

Alternative contact and support methods are in place for those unable to access the internet or in need of additional support.

The application can be submitted by one of the following:

- a) When you enter the Housing online portal by clicking the link to the housing register, it will ask you for your name, date of birth and national insurance number and if we already hold an application for you it will advise you on what to do next. If not, it will take to you to the electronic online form.

- b) If you are being referred by one of the agencies we work with, they will assist you to submit an application if this is deemed one of your options.

Wherever you enter the Housing portal you will be given a unique identification number. The identification number will enable you to access the housing portal. You will be asked to create this account when you log on for the first time, The account will hold a reference number, memorable date and password, and these should be held by you to access the account.

The Allocations Scheme is supported by our Housing and Benefits Service. They are responsible for:

- Assisting you in navigation of the housing online portal.
- Conducting prevention interviews.
- Agreeing stabilisation plans
- Processing the intended housing solutions including applications to join the housing register.

Once you have submitted your application and based on the sections of the form you have completed, the system will:

1. Show you your application and allow you to inform of any changes
2. Once assessed you will receive confirmation of eligibility and if eligible details on how to place bids
3. Provide you with the average waiting times for the types of accommodation in the areas you have chosen.

1.3 Evidence

For a complete list of proof and verification required please refer to section **4.3 Proof & Verification Required in the policy.**

In addition to this evidence of a connection to Broadland or South Norfolk may be required to be provided. Where a connection to Broadland or South Norfolk is through work (and in relation to the exemption for applicants through the Right to Move) employment must be physically located in either of the districts, not be short term or marginal or ancillary to work in another area or voluntary.

Evidence of current employment or the offer of employment will be required.

1.4 Financial Resources

Applicants to the Broadland or South Norfolk Housing registers will not qualify where they are considered to have sufficient financial resources, to secure accommodation within the private sector, please see **section 3.4 non- qualification rules.** Financial resources include income, savings and equity.

- Income

If you have a net household income above the levels below for your bedroom need you will not be eligible to join the Housing Register

Number of bedrooms	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Annual Household Income	£21,750	£26,500	£32,000	£42,500

Please note we do not include any housing related benefits or disability benefits in the household income.

- Savings

If you have savings, capital or investments over the amounts below you will not be eligible to join the housing register. Please note this includes all bank accounts, ISAs, Stocks & Shares, money, etc held by the household

State Pensionable Age - £50,000

Working Age - £20,000

- Equity in property

If you have equity in property you may not be eligible to join the housing register if the amount you hold is over the levels below

State Pensionable Age - £60,000

Working Age - £30,000

1.5 Safe surrender

The Safe Surrender Agreement is considered both a prevention and stabilisation under the Accommodation Pathway Model. **See Section 5.** It shows the tenant is being responsible and taking the necessary action and has taken the time to negotiate safeguards. This reconciles with the promotion of tenancy sustainment. **See section 4.**

2 The Allocations Process

The Key Stages



Property Identification:	Notification by the agent or partner landlord of a property that is available to let
Expression of Interest:	The applicant either bidding or agreeing to view a direct offer
Letting:	Offer, viewing, resulting the offer and lettings types
Tenancy Sustainment:	Sign up and continued supervision of new tenancies with support

2.1 Blended Allocations

The Allocations Scheme combines allocations by direct lets and choice-based lettings as a blended system. The majority of properties are advertised through the choice-based lettings system. Applicants have their own accounts and access the system via online. They are able to bid for a property. The list of bidders are shortlisted and the highest priority applicants are usually put through to the partner landlord who owns the property.

However, there are times when the properties are not advertised, instead they are matched direct to an applicant and the applicant is nominated to the partner landlord who owns the property. These are called direct lets and they are used to manage the most urgent or specialised cases.

Matching and Shortlisting will prioritise active cases. Where this is exhausted the inactive list will be used and selection is subject to:

- Satisfactory progress during a stabilisation period
- Tenancy failure is low risk
- Agreement by the partner landlord.

2.2 Predicting Properties

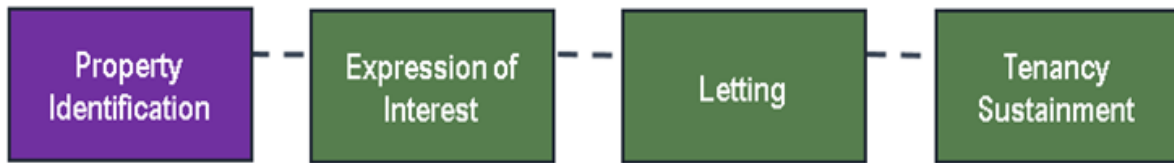
The Council will use information provided by the Allocations Scheme to predict the number, type and location of properties due for letting. This is undertaken on a strategic and operational level in order to meet the needs of the applicants the Scheme is designed to house.

Annual Lettings Plan:	Each year an annual lettings plan will be produced based on consultation with the Housing Enabling Team who are responsible for overseeing all the affordable homes being built in the area. They will have expected handover dates which will be affirmed by the partner
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Supply and Demand Modelling:

landlord who is building the properties. Based on averages in previous years it is also possible to predict how many properties already in management with the partner landlords will be expected to become empty (void). The plan is usually broken down into quarters and by partner landlord and then further as new build and relets. It should also be possible to assess whether they are specialist units such as Housing with Care, sheltered, adapted, or general use (general needs). Partner landlords will make properties available under agreement. In order to plan longer term, a supply and demand model is used to determine the types, size, numbers and locations where properties need to be developed. This is known as the supply. The demand is the number of applicants on the housing register and the type, size and location of the properties they need. The Housing and Benefits service will work with the Housing Enabling Team and the partner landlords to undertake this exercise. Ideally the model should aim to predict 3-5 years and longer if possible. The predictions are used by the housing developers to undertake scheme appraisals for affordable housing in the required areas.

3 Property Identification



When a partner landlord has a property that is available to let, they notify the Council, who will monitor the number of properties they receive from each partner landlord and then determine whether they need to match it to an urgent applicant as a direct let or advertise it as a choice based letting. Each month end and quarter end, the totals will be reconciled against the predicted properties in the annual lettings plan and against the targets set for direct lets and choice-based lettings. There may be other targets which will also need to be factored into the allocation.

Therefore, the allocation of a property takes place on two levels:

- a) At letting type
- b) At applicant level

3.1 Choice Based Lettings

The main method of allocation is via choice-based lettings and the majority of properties are advertised in order for applicants to be able to choose. There will be specific restrictions:

- Applicants can only bid for the property type and size they are allowed. **See section 4.4.13 within the policy**
- 80% of the properties advertised will be open for bidding by all applicants.
- 20% of the properties advertised will be targeted for social landlord tenant transfers only.
- Targeted adverts for adapted units, those restricted under a local letting plan, rural letting scheme or s106 agreement.
- Applicants will be limited to 3 offers.
- Ensuring a balance between homeless applicants and other priority need with local demand in Emergency Band.

3.2 Property Descriptions

The advert or direct offer letter should contain a clear description of the property.

- a) Photographs
- b) Type (house, flat)
- c) Tenure (social rented, private rented, shared ownership)
- d) Number and max occupancy of bedrooms
- e) Location
- f) Level of accessibility for those with mobility issues/wheelchair users
- g) Services provided (sheltered housing scheme manager, caretaker)
- h) Heating type
- i) Age restrictions
- j) Whether pets are allowed
- k) Availability of outside space (garden etc.) and parking
- l) Rent and service charges (split weekly/monthly) and rent regime.
- m) Special information (location of bus routes/ other amenities)
- n) Property size category (known as the PPGC code)

- o) Targeted advert for transfers only or if a local letting provision only
- p) Permission to under occupy.

3.3 Hard to Lets

Some properties are harder to let because they are less attractive to applicants who will either refuse them or fail to bid for them. This could be for a number of reasons including, location, floor level, age, and condition. Broadland District or South Norfolk Council will consult with the landlord and if it is deemed hard to let, then it may be made available to a wider pool of people on the Housing Register. This would include households that can afford to under-occupy by one bedroom. If after an advert cycle the property is not let, it will be offered to South Norfolk Council. If the property is still not let, it may be offered to another Local Authority with permission from the partner landlord. The Council must ensure that it has been let to eligible applicants in priority need.

3.4 Sensitive Lets

Sensitive lets are rare and likely to be due to two main reasons:

1. Where we have to be careful with the applicant or a member of their household due a traumatic incident. We need to consider the location of the property or even the type of the property to ensure that the accommodation would not expose them to undue stress. In these cases, we will undertake a sensitive let as a direct offer.
2. Where the partner landlord informs us that a property has a management history which requires the careful selection of the next tenant to ensure harmony in the area where it is located. In these cases, we may have a targeted advert for transfers only as a choice-based letting or we will make a direct offer.

In both cases the priority order and time waited will be preserved. We will however be using additional selection criteria to manage the letting sensitively. Both types of cases must be presented to Allocations Scheme Panel for approval. If it is the applicant and their identity must be protected then, only the case specifics will be heard by the Panel.

3.5 Viewings

There is no obligation on the applicant to take a property unseen. The partner landlord will contact the applicant to arrange a viewing. They will send an Officer to attend the viewing with the applicant. Following the viewing the applicant will be expected to either accept or refuse the property. If they refuse, they will be referred back to the Council and another applicant known as a nomination will be requested. If the partner landlord pulled the shortlist themselves, they will go to the next suitable applicant on the shortlist and repeat the offer process until the property is accepted. If it proves hard to let. **See section 3.3**

There are three types of viewing:

Single Viewing: One applicant views the property at any one time. This will be used primarily for sensitive lets.

Multiple Viewing: The Council encourages multiple viewings where possible. More than one applicant will

view at the same time. All the applicants will be verified. Only the top applicant is offered formally. The remainder are given viewing letters only. If the top one refuses, the next one is formally offered etc. Any who failed to get a formal offer will be withdrawn. There are no penalties for having it withdrawn in this situation.

Accompanied Viewing:

This may be single or multiple. The applicant is accompanied by either an advocate, a Support Worker, a Housing Officer or an Occupational Therapist. It is usually offered where the applicant is likely to need extra assistance around the viewing in respect of vulnerability, mobility need, and navigation around their rights under the homeless duty.

3.6 Resulting the Offer

Recording the outcome of the viewing/offer is called resulting the offer. It is mandatory in order to preserve the offer history and property history. It also serves to allow management of the Councils and partner landlord partnership arrangement.

The partner landlord will obtain a formal record of the outcome. The table below outlines each type of result and the ensuing action.

Outcome	Action Required	Applicant Status
Withdrawn - multiple viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No penalty ▪ Automatic system function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer history preserved
Withdrawn - other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner landlord refuses applicant ▪ Councils withdraw ▪ Housing register review initiated. See Part 6 of the Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer history preserved ▪ Housing Register review with review period ▪ May require an investigation. ▪ Under review and inactive to bid allow a review and/or investigation to take place
Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acceptance recorded ▪ Provisional tenancy start dated recorded ▪ Monitored for sign up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer history preserved ▪ Status changes to accepted ▪ Inactive to bid
Refused – homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refusal recorded ▪ Limited Offer maintenance See part 5.3.2 of the policy ▪ Statutory review initiated See part 6 of the policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer history preserved ▪ Statutory review with a review period ▪ Under statutory review and inactive to bid ▪ The review will pick up changes in circumstances and penalties as a result of a single offer.

Outcome	Action Required	Applicant Status
Refused – other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refusal recorded ▪ Limited Offer maintenance See part 5.3.2 of the policy ▪ Exceed limited offer penalty evoked ▪ Change of circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer history preserved ▪ Change of circumstance prompts a Housing Register review with review period ▪ Number of offers remaining ▪ Penalty action if limited offers exceeded

3.7 Publicising Lettings

Our performance around lettings is publicised on our Housing Portal, on property search average waiting time. This uses live up to date data.

On the property page of the choice-based lettings system the Council will show:

- Areas where properties were let
- Number of bids each property had
- Band and effective band date of the successful applicant came from for each property
- No personal information will be disclosed

4 Tenancy Sustainment



Our Accommodation Pathway Model ensures that anyone who approaches us for housing, or a housing related matter will be sent through the key stages of:

- Marketplace
- Prevention
- Stabilisation
- Resolution

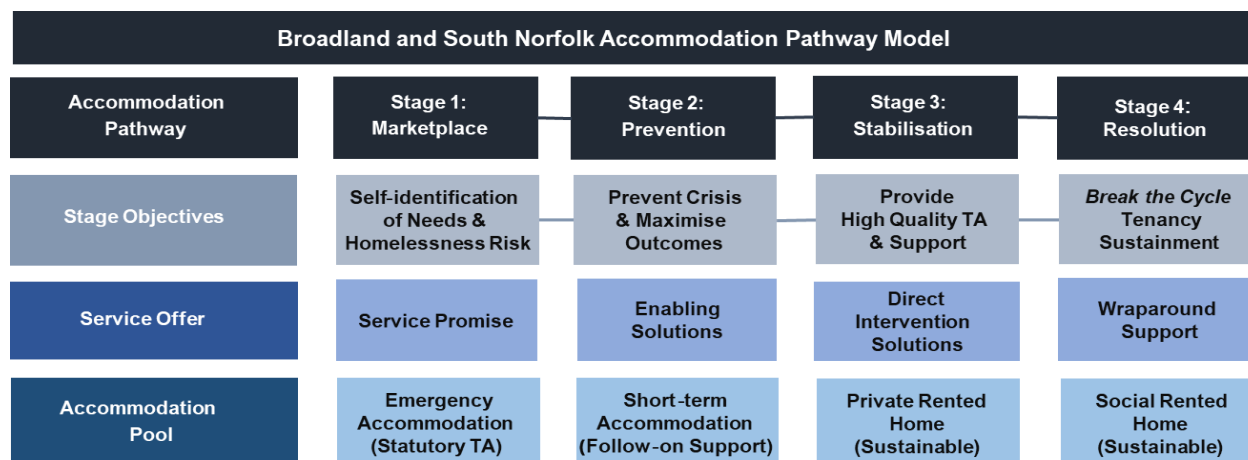
The Allocations Scheme is designed to deliver longer-term solutions for people, and this means making it possible for them to stay in the home of their choice and one that meets their need. We therefore ensure that at each of the key stages of the model we will do everything practically possible to promote tenancy sustainment.

The table below describes the tenancy sustainment measures that are/could be adopted in order to achieve tenancy sustainment.

Item	Tenancy Sustainment Measures
Marketplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personalised Housing Plan is designed for the household ▪ Affordability and household size will be considered ▪ Specific health needs will be considered ▪ Age will be considered ▪ Support and care needs will be considered ▪ Previous tenant history will be considered ▪ Professional reports will be considered
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each case presenting in high priority need and prior to any housing register decision will be assessed and to see if there is a prevention solution with the provider of their existing home ▪ Support and care assessment will be undertaken to see if more or different is needed ▪ Living skills will be promoted to allow tenancy management learning ▪ Families will be prioritised alongside single people if they are reaching crisis point ▪ Referring agents will be required to undertake a hands-on approach ▪ Safe Surrender Agreements put in place before a failing tenancy is surrendered. See 3.7

Item	Tenancy Sustainment Measures
Stabilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discharge of duty will only take place if the applicant is completely unwilling to engage in the previous key stages of the model ▪ All temporary solutions will be quantified and qualified in order to set a tenancy sustainment standard and promote learning ▪ People who are not ready to live independently will undertake a period of stabilisation to see if this will remedy the situation. They will not be able to bid for social housing during this time. ▪ Support and skills will be introduced to promote learning and redressing of any negative tenancy behaviour ▪ Reduced preference cases will be subject to a mandatory period of stabilisation to ensure they address the behaviour which resulted in the assignment of preference assignment. They will be unable to bid for social housing and may not qualify for other housing options either as private landlords will have similar requirements to partner landlords. ▪ The existence of a Safe Surrender Agreements prior to tenancy failure, shows the applicant is prepared to take responsibility and negotiate stability prior to surrendering the tenancy. It allows the Councils to assess their application with this in mind and will likely allow them to qualify without the need of reduced preference. This in turn enables the current priority need, to be addressed much earlier and factored into the Personalised Housing Plan. See 3.6
Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All types of housing solutions will be considered with recourse to tenancy sustainment implications ▪ Partner landlord and other housing providers within the partnership will be required to work with the Council to provide a hand holding period for applicants who have support and care identified and require longer to settle in. During this time, their application will remain open but suspended subject to a satisfactory assessment with input from the applicant themselves and any agencies involved. If the assessment is successful and they are managing their tenancy effectively, their application will be closed retrospectively. The tenancy start date will be used as the closure date to ensure performance is not penalised. ▪ Applicants being referred to the rent deposit schemes, and other such private housing options may experience a longer period of stabilisation as private landlords are less likely to be partners. ▪ The partner landlords usually have a tenancy support or sustainment service which will support the new tenancy and this should be flagged as a requirement for all applicants who have undergone a mandatory stabilisation period and for those who are already identified with support and care provision. ▪ The Council and the partner landlords will have the final decision in whether to accept a level of risk in relation to tenancy sustainment with an applicant. ▪ The Council and the partner landlords will seek to provide a guarantee where practically possible with applicants which meet the threshold of high risk.

5 Pathway Model



The model relies on investment of resources at the front end of our service by looking at how we work with households when they first approach the Council.

5.1 Marketplace

This would involve:

- A self-service portal for exploring options available to the household
- Where necessary, direct intervention will be undertaken to prevent homelessness
- The market place will give each household a bespoke Accommodation Options Plan
- Assistance will be available for those who find the website difficult to use.

5.2 Prevention

This would involve:

- Help for high risk households to avoid a point of crisis
- Prevention-based case work
- Support to enable people to remain in their home where this is feasible
- Investment of resources to prepare people to take control of their Personalised Housing Plan and ultimately the solutions necessary to prevent the homelessness risk reoccurring
- Targeting services to homeless families.

5.3 Stabilisation

This would provide:

- Sustainable discharge of Statutory Duties
- Excellent quality Temporary Accommodation that meets needs
- Directive casework to help find a longer-term home
- Wraparound support for those who need more than just a roof

5.4 Resolution

Undertaken by:

- Resolving homelessness for all applicants
- Exploring social and private sector options
- Building resilience and tenancy management skills
- Coordinating partnership support to break the cycle of homelessness, eviction and short-term solutions

5.5 Enabling the Model

The model relies on key components being in place to work.

Best in Class TA Solutions	Best in Class Housing Solutions	Best in Class Partnership Solutions	Best in Class Performance Framework
Right provision in the right place at the right price	Fair and efficient allocations and sustained tenancies	Strategic, holistic, delivering value-added outcomes	Compliance, performance, sustainable outcomes. See Table 3
Predictive Model to predict demand	Allocations Scheme which is common to all partners and is flexible and fair	Landlord and Council risk-sharing to jointly sustain tenancies	
Procurement Strategy based on sustainable costs	Supply and Demand modelling	Jointly commissioned support services	

Best in Class TA Solutions	Best in Class Housing Solutions	Best in Class Partnership Solutions	Best in Class Performance Framework
Focused, performance driven service	Structured Customer Journey. See Table 1	Unlock PRS supply through a Social Lettings Agency	
Performance framework which optimises demand and throughput	Partnership Agreements. See Table 2	Identification and management of accommodation solutions	

Table 1

Structured Customer Journey			
Marketplace Advice & Guidance	Application & Assessment	Waiting list Management	Allocation Offer
TA ,Social, Private, Specialist, Low-cost Home Ownership	On-line Assessment & Triage	Self-managed Application	Nominations
Self-service Advice & Guidance	Personalised Applications	Change of Circumstance	Choice-based Lettings
Self-referral Pathway	Validation & Verification Framework	Automated Notifications and Reminders	Sensitive Lets
Assisted Choice	Support Services Referral	Scheduled Reviews	Targeted Advertising

Table 2

Formalised Partnership Arrangements			
Waiting list Management	Allocation Offer	Lettings	Sustainment
Waiting List Protocol	Allocations Protocol	Resulting Offer	New Tenancy Management
Joint Management	Application Verification	Resulting Application	Joint Solution Provision
List Management	System Delegated Authority	Multiple & Assisted Viewings	Tenancy Sustainment
Data Sharing Protocol	Bypass Verification	Hard to Lets	Migration Review

Table 3

Housing Service Performance Framework					
Compliance	Council Statutory Reporting	Landlord Statutory Reporting	Policy Application	Process & Evidence Audit	Policy Application
Service Performance	Service Access	Housing Register Management	TA Management	Allocations & Lettings Management	Partnership Management
Sustainable Outcomes	Customer Outcomes	Business Outcomes	Partnership Outcomes	TA Supply & Demand Modelling	Housing Supply & Demand Modelling