

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet

Title	Revised Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020
Decision maker	Cabinet Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251
Date of decision	27 February 2020
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.
A notice was served in accordance with Part 3 (Key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.	
General exception or special urgency (as defined in the constitution)	No
Purpose	To approve the Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020. Under Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended) the council is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and providing information on all aspects of the allocation process. This is required even though Herefordshire Council does not have its own social housing stock because it does have nomination rights to a proportion of the properties owned by registered providers (RPs) in the county that become vacant and available for letting. A housing allocation policy was approved by Cabinet in April 2018 but this has not been implemented due to issues around the required IT support which are identified below. The delay has enabled review and revision of the 2018 policy in the light of further guidance, notably in respect of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the change in procedures arising from the reversion to a choice based lettings (CBL) scheme.

	<p>The amendments to the 2018 policy include some changes to the banding criteria, improved clarity on additional preference for armed forces personnel and a band for existing tenants and general applicants. The latter band will not be assessed by the council's housing register team but will provide a means by which the Registered Providers (RP) can let the percentage of their vacant properties which are not subject to the percentages detailed in the nomination agreements with the RPs. Exclusion and reduced preference has been replaced with suspension from bidding, in the light of recent legal advice. The majority of the amendments however relate to the revision of procedures to reflect the maintenance of a choice based lettings scheme rather than the proposed data transfer and manual nomination process envisaged in the 2018 policy.</p> <p>In order to support the maintenance of a choice based lettings system and to enable implementation of the revised housing allocation scheme it is necessary to upgrade the IT system procured as part of the service redesign process, in particular to have an improved advertising module with better connectivity and more features to improve the information available to prospective tenants.</p>
Decision	<p>That: (a) The revised Housing Allocation Scheme at Appendix 1 is approved; (b) Any minor amendments to the scheme necessary to enable implementation are delegated to the Cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety.</p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50031407</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not to approve the revised allocation policy and continue to operate the 2014 policy. This option is not recommended as it would not allow the council to comply with allocation law and would not address some of the issues around unmet housing need or low demand properties. 2. Not to approve the revised allocation policy but implement the 2018 policy without amendment. This option is not recommended as it would not reflect current guidance and would not fully support the statutory requirement to provide information on all aspects of the allocation process.
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	4 March 2020

Councillor:

Date 27 February 2020

Leader of the Council (Councillor David Hitchiner)

- a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the member which relates to the decision;

and

- in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted.