



Committee

**Housing Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

Date and Time

23rd September 2026
10am

Public

Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme

Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Owen – Portfolio Holder for Housing
Lead Director:	Paula Mawson – Service Director for Communities and Customer
Service Area:	Communities and Customer (Housing Services)
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Key Decision?	Non Key
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not Applicable
Report considered by	Not Applicable

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Shropshire's Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an early opportunity to understand the proposed review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme, including the Council's statutory duties, current housing register and homelessness demand, proposed policy changes and operational improvements. This report enables Scrutiny to contribute its thinking and make any recommendations to Cabinet ahead of a future report seeking approval to undertake public consultation on the revised policy.

2. Recommendations

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to

- 2.1 Note the Council's statutory duty to operate a lawful housing allocation scheme under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, including the requirement to give reasonable preference to specified categories of applicants and to allocate social housing in accordance with the published scheme.
- 2.2 Support a full review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme to ensure it remains lawful, transparent, fair, consistently applied and aligned to current housing need, homelessness pressures, affordable housing supply and the Council's wider Housing Strategy review.
- 2.3 Consider and provide comments and recommendations to Cabinet on a range of potential policy changes ahead of public consultation.
- 2.4 Agree that the outcomes and feedback of the public consultation and the draft refreshed policy are received by Scrutiny for pre-decision comments and recommendations to Cabinet, ahead of the policy being presented to Council for approval.

3. Background

- 3.1 Shropshire HomePoint is Shropshire Council's housing register and choice-based lettings service for social and affordable housing. The system provides all registered providers who operate in Shropshire the ability to advertise and allocate their available social housing properties. Eligible applicants are assessed in accordance with the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme and placed into priority bands based on their housing need and circumstances. Available properties are advertised and applicants can express interest in homes that meet their assessed housing requirements.
- 3.2 The Council has a statutory duty under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 to have and operate a lawful allocation scheme. The scheme must set out who can apply, how applications are assessed, how priority is determined, and the procedures followed when social housing is allocated. The Council must also give reasonable preference to specified categories of applicants, including people who are homeless, people owed certain homelessness duties, those living in overcrowded or unsatisfactory housing, people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, and people who need to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship.
- 3.3 Although the Council does not have to provide social housing to everyone who joins the register, it must ensure that decisions are made lawfully, transparently and consistently in accordance with the published allocation scheme. This includes clear governance over banding decisions, nominations, direct lets, bypassing applicants, exceptions and review rights.

- 3.4 The HomePoint register currently has 8 bands and includes a significant number of households with differing levels of assessed housing need. As of 1 August 2026, there were 4,944 households on the register, but during 2025/26 there were only 855 social housing properties let across the county demonstrating a lack of supply for all registered providers operating in Shropshire.
- 3.5 The review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme provides an opportunity to ensure that the scheme aligns with current council priorities, is legally robust and in line with current pressures. This includes the relationship between allocations and homelessness duties, the prioritisation of local housing need, the affordability of market housing in Shropshire, access for vulnerable groups, the use of direct nominations and direct lets, and the operational processes required to support consistent decision-making.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

- 4.1 Review the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme
The main proposal is to undertake a full review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme to ensure it remains lawful, transparent, fair, consistently applied and aligned to current housing need across Shropshire. There are some changes that are necessary due to changes in regulation, however some changes are proposals that need discussion in line with the significant demand across the county.
- 4.2 Align the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme with statutory duties and homelessness pressures
The review must ensure the policy continues to meet the Council's duties under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and gives reasonable preference to the required categories of applicants. It should also ensure that the allocations framework aligns effectively with Part 7 homelessness duties so that homelessness decisions, housing register priority and discharge of homelessness duties are clearly connected and consistently applied.
- 4.3 Consider a review of local connection arrangements
The review could consider whether the housing register should remain open to applicants with no local connection who are currently placed in Band 7, or whether Shropshire should move towards a closed register where applicants must evidence a local connection before joining, subject to statutory exemptions. Any change would need to protect groups such as people fleeing domestic abuse, care leavers, Armed Forces households and applicants owed relevant homelessness duties.
- 4.4 Consider a rural allocation criterion to support local people accessing local homes
The review could consider whether a clearer rural allocation criterion is needed to support the principle that local people should have fair access to homes in their local communities, particularly in smaller settlements where affordable housing supply is limited and housing need may be closely linked to family, employment, caring responsibilities, schooling, support networks or long-standing community connection. Any rural criterion would need to be carefully framed so that it remains lawful, transparent, evidence-based and consistent with reasonable preference requirements, while also supporting sustainable rural communities and making best use of scarce local housing supply.

4.5 Consider a review of income, savings and asset thresholds

The Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme currently places applicants in Band 7 where they have gross household income above £50,000, savings or assets including property equity above £200,000, or both. The review could consider whether these thresholds remain appropriate in light of local incomes, private rent levels, mortgage accessibility, household size, disability-related costs and availability of suitable alternative accommodation. The review could also consider excluding disability benefits for children from income assessments.

4.6 Strengthen direct nominations and direct lets and exceptional matching

The review could consider the use of a Choice Based Letting system, or the introduction of a nomination-based option. Alternatively, adaptations to the current Choice Based Lettings system that ensures clearer wording to allow the Council to make direct nominations or direct lets where appropriate. It could also consider formal arrangements for adapted property matching so that scarce adapted stock is used effectively.

4.7 Strengthen governance and improve transparency, audit trails and review rights

The review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme should strengthen governance, improve transparency and ensure the policy is better aligned with Council priorities. This should include clearer arrangements for shortlisting, bypassing applicants, direct lets, nominations and cases where homelessness duties apply. Decisions should be supported by clear reasons, with bypass decisions recorded, Housing Options notified where homelessness duties are relevant, equality impacts considered and evidenced, and appeal or review rights set out clearly so that applicants and authorised representatives understand how relevant decisions can be challenged. The review should also clarify key operational areas within the policy, including merging Bands 1A and 1B into a single Band 1 category for operational simplicity, clarifying medical banding criteria, amending Band 3 overcrowding wording, strengthening domestic abuse and violence wording, updating Prevention Duty wording, clarifying Public Sector Equality Duty expectations, and correcting outdated or inconsistent references.

5. Alternative Options

Option 1: Do nothing / retain the current policy unchanged

The Council could choose not to review or amend the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme at this stage. This would avoid immediate consultation, legal, system and operational work. However, it would not address known areas where the policy would benefit from clarification, including banding, local connection, income and asset thresholds, direct lets, adapted property matching, governance of bypass decisions and alignment with homelessness duties. This option carries a risk that the policy becomes less responsive to current housing need, unlawful, more vulnerable to inconsistency or challenge and does not provide reasonable preference to the specified categories of applicants.

Option 2: Make minor drafting and operational clarifications only

The Council could limit the review to minor drafting corrections and operational clarifications that do not materially affect applicants' rights, qualification or priority. This would reduce consultation requirements and implementation complexity. However, it would not address the more significant questions identified in the briefing paper, including whether the register should remain open to households with no local connection, whether financial thresholds

remain appropriate, and whether stronger direct nomination and exceptional matching arrangements are required.

Option 3: Undertake a full policy review and public consultation

The Council could undertake a full review of the Allocation Policy, supported by legal advice, equality impact assessment, engagement with registered providers and public consultation. This option would enable the Council to consider major policy changes in a transparent and evidence-led way, including local connection, financial thresholds, banding, direct nominations and operational governance. It would require officer capacity, consultation resource and Abritas system planning, but would provide the strongest audit trail and reduce the risk of challenge.

Option 4: Introduce selected major policy changes only

The Council could focus only on selected major changes, such as moving to a closed register for applicants without a local connection or revising income and asset thresholds. However, considering individual changes in isolation may create unintended consequences, particularly where one change increases register demand while another reduces it. It may also miss the opportunity to align the policy fully with the Housing Strategy review and wider operational improvements.

Preferred option

The preferred option is to undertake a full review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme alongside the wider Housing Strategy review, with legal advice, equality impact assessment, engagement with registered providers, public consultation and Abritas system (Customer Records Management) planning before any major changes are adopted. This provides a proportionate and legally robust approach, supports transparency and public confidence, and enables scrutiny to consider the policy, consultation feedback, operational impacts, KPIs and suggested targets before implementation.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

Risk	Mitigation
Risk that significant policy changes are made without sufficient legal advice, public consultation or equality assessment, increasing the likelihood of challenge or inconsistent decision-making.	Seek early legal advice, complete an equality impact assessment and undertake appropriate public consultation and engagement with registered providers and key partners before any major policy changes are adopted or implemented.
Risk that changes to local connection rules could unlawfully or unfairly exclude applicants who should be protected by statutory exemptions or reasonable preference requirements.	Ensure any closed-register approach is carefully framed, with clear exemptions for relevant groups including people fleeing domestic abuse, care leavers, Armed Forces households and applicants owed relevant homelessness duties.
Risk that increasing income, savings or asset thresholds expands the number of applicants in the lower bands without increasing the supply of available social housing.	Base any threshold changes on clear evidence of local affordability, private rent levels, mortgage access, household size and disability-related costs, and clearly communicate that acceptance onto the register does not guarantee an offer of social housing.

Risk that operational capacity is insufficient to reassess affected applications, particularly Band 7 cases, while maintaining business-as-usual processing and review timescales.	Develop an implementation plan setting out staffing requirements, phasing, communications, review processes and temporary capacity needs before any changes go live.
Risk that Abritas system changes are not scoped, costed or delivered in time to support any agreed policy changes.	Engage early with Abritas to confirm configuration requirements, timescales, testing, implementation dates, communications and any costs before policy changes go live.
Risk that registered providers apply nominations, affordability checks, bypass decisions or direct-let arrangements inconsistently.	Strengthen partner engagement, nominations agreements, operational guidance and audit arrangements so that participating landlords apply the scheme consistently and transparently.
Risk that equality impacts are not fully identified for vulnerable households, disabled applicants, care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse, Armed Forces households and applicants with specialist housing needs.	Complete a full equality impact assessment, consider reasonable adjustments and ensure the policy clearly protects statutory exemptions and reasonable preference groups.
Risk that direct lets, exceptional allocations or bypass decisions are not sufficiently evidenced, creating perceived unfairness or increased challenge.	Introduce clearer approval routes, recording requirements, equality checks, Housing Options oversight where homelessness duties apply and regular audit of direct lets, nominations and bypass decisions.
Risk that policy changes create unintended consequences, for example increasing the number of applicants who qualify without improving the likelihood of rehousing.	Model the potential impact of proposed changes on register size, banding, lettings demand, temporary accommodation pressures and applicant expectations before final recommendations are made.
Risk that proposed policy changes create financial pressures for the Council and registered providers, including increased void periods, reduced numbers of suitable applicants for some properties, additional affordability checks, higher refusal rates or a greater proportion of complex households requiring more intensive support to sustain tenancies.	Model the potential financial and operational impacts with registered providers before consultation and implementation, including void turnaround, lettings performance, refusal reasons, demand by property type, affordability outcomes and tenancy sustainment risks. Use this evidence to inform final policy proposals, partner agreements, communications and any resourcing or support requirements.
Risk that scrutiny does not have sufficient oversight of consultation outcomes, implementation progress, operational impacts, KPIs and whether the revised policy is achieving its intended outcomes.	Develop a clear monitoring framework for scrutiny, including agreed KPIs and suggested targets covering register size, application processing, review requests, allocations by band, nomination outcomes, direct lets, adapted property matching, local connection decisions and temporary accommodation move-on.

7. Council Priorities

7.1 A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce supported to excel

The review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme supports the Council's central priority ambition by ensuring that the housing register and allocation scheme are lawful, transparent, consistently applied and focused on the effective use of limited social and affordable housing. A clear policy framework will support better demand management, stronger governance, reduced risk of legal challenge and improved oversight of operational decision-making. The review will also need to consider workforce capacity, including the resources required to reassess applications, implement system changes, manage consultation and maintain business-as-usual service delivery.

7.2 Communities that are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure

The allocations policy has an indirect but important relationship with this ambition. In a large rural county, access to suitable housing is closely linked to transport, local infrastructure, schools, health services, employment, caring responsibilities and support networks. A clear and evidence-led allocation framework can help ensure that local connection, hardship, employment, family support and rural access issues are considered fairly and consistently when assessing housing need and determining priority.

7.3 People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

This is the strongest direct alignment with the Corporate Plan. The Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme determines how scarce social and affordable housing is prioritised and allocated to households in need. The review will consider how the policy supports households who are homeless, overcrowded, living in unsuitable housing, fleeing domestic abuse or violence, affected by medical or welfare needs, requiring adapted accommodation, ready to move on from supported housing, or needing to move to avoid hardship. Strengthening local connection rules, banding criteria, direct nominations, direct lets and exceptional matching will help ensure that homes are allocated fairly to those whose needs are greatest.

7.4 Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and to thrive at every stage of life

Access to suitable, secure and affordable housing is an important foundation for health, wellbeing and independence. The Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme review supports this ambition by considering how priority is given to applicants with medical, welfare, disability, domestic abuse, safeguarding, care leaver and other support needs. Clearer medical banding, stronger wording on domestic abuse and violence, improved exceptional matching for adapted or specialist accommodation and alignment between allocations and homelessness duties will help ensure that vulnerable households are considered fairly and receive appropriate priority where their housing circumstances affect their ability to live safely and independently.

7.5 An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing

The Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme review has limited direct environmental implications, but it can support wellbeing by helping households access suitable homes in places where they can sustain family life, employment, education, care, support networks and community connections. In the context of

Shropshire's rural geography, decisions about local connection, hardship, employment and access to services should recognise the importance of place-based wellbeing and the impact that unsuitable or poorly located housing can have on people's health, independence and community participation.

7.6 A thriving economy that benefits everyone

The review supports this ambition by considering how the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme can help residents remain connected to employment, education, training and local communities. The policy already recognises housing need linked to excessive travel to employment, key worker status and hardship where a move to a particular locality is needed. Reviewing income and asset thresholds, key worker criteria and local connection rules will help the Council consider how best to balance statutory housing need with the wider economic importance of enabling people to live and work in Shropshire, while recognising that social housing supply remains limited.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme has potential financial implications for the Council, although the scale of these will depend on the nature of any changes agreed following legal advice, equality assessment, consultation and scrutiny. The report does not seek approval for additional expenditure at this stage, but identifies that future costs, savings or resource pressures may arise.
- 8.2 There may be additional operational costs associated with reviewing and implementing policy changes. These include officer time to draft the revised policy, obtain legal advice, complete an equality impact assessment, engage with registered providers, undertake public consultation, analyse responses, prepare decision reports and implement any agreed changes. There may also be costs or resource implications linked to Abritas system configuration, testing, communications and staff training.
- 8.3 Changes to income, savings and asset thresholds could increase or reduce the number of applicants who qualify for lower bands, depending on the final proposal. Increasing thresholds may increase the number of households on the active register and create additional administrative demand through application assessments, verification, reviews and case management. Moving to a closed register for applicants without a local connection may reduce some administrative demand, but this would need to be balanced against statutory exemptions and the impact of any other policy changes.
- 8.4 Any future policy changes should be supported by financial and operational modelling, including the likely impact on register size, application processing, review requests, nominations, direct lets, adapted property matching and temporary accommodation move-on. Where additional resource requirements are identified, these should be considered through the Council's normal budget, governance and decision-making processes.

9. Legal and HR implications

- 9.1 The review has significant legal implications because the allocation of social housing must comply with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, relevant statutory guidance, public law principles and the Council's published allocation scheme. The Council must ensure that the policy sets out who can apply, how priority is assessed, how properties are allocated, how reasonable preference is given to statutory groups and how applicants can request a review of relevant decisions.
- 9.2 Major policy changes, including changes to local connection rules, income and asset thresholds, banding priority, direct lets, nominations, homelessness cases or access for vulnerable groups, should be subject to appropriate legal advice before consultation and before final adoption. The Council should not assume that all suggested changes can be made without consultation, particularly where changes may affect the relative priority or qualification of a large number of applicants.
- 9.3 The Council must also have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when reviewing the policy. An equality impact assessment should be completed to consider the potential impact of proposed changes on protected and vulnerable groups, including disabled applicants, households fleeing domestic abuse, care leavers, Armed Forces households, applicants with medical or welfare needs, and households requiring adapted or specialist accommodation.
- 9.4 There are also legal and governance implications for nominations, direct lets, exceptional allocations, management transfers and bypass decisions. Any revised policy should clearly identify when these routes may be used, who has authority to approve them, what evidence must be recorded, how equality impacts will be considered and how decisions will remain transparent, consistent and capable of review.
- 9.5 HR implications are likely to relate mainly to workforce capacity, training and change management. Reviewing the policy, undertaking consultation, reassessing affected applications, updating operational guidance and implementing system changes will require officer time across HomePoint, Housing Options, legal, policy, equality, communications and IT/system support functions.
- 9.6 Staff will need clear guidance and training on any agreed changes, particularly in relation to local connection, financial assessments, medical and welfare priority, domestic abuse and violence, statutory homelessness links, key worker criteria, direct lets, nominations, bypass decisions, review rights and use of the Abritas system.
- 9.7 If the review results in a significant number of applications requiring reassessment, particularly applicants currently in Band 7, there may be temporary workload pressures. These should be considered through implementation planning, including phasing, communications, additional capacity if required and monitoring of processing and review timescales.

10. Electoral Division Implications

- 10.1. None – this report is relevant countywide

11. Health, Social (including “Child Friendly Shropshire”) and Economic Implications

- 11.1 The Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme has significant health, social and economic implications because it determines how limited social and affordable housing is prioritised for households in housing need. Access to suitable, secure and affordable housing is a key foundation for health, wellbeing, independence, family stability and participation in education, employment and community life.
- 11.2 The review should ensure that applicants with medical, welfare, disability, safeguarding or support needs are assessed fairly and consistently. Clearer criteria for medical banding, improved adapted property matching and a specialist or exceptional housing needs pathway would help ensure that households whose current accommodation affects their health, safety or independence are appropriately prioritised.
- 11.3 There are important social implications for children, families, care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse or violence, Armed Forces households, people moving on from supported accommodation and households experiencing overcrowding or unsuitable housing. The policy review provides an opportunity to ensure that these circumstances are reflected clearly in qualification, banding, reasonable preference and exceptional allocation arrangements.
- 11.4 The policy review is relevant to Child Friendly Shropshire because housing stability, overcrowding, unsuitable accommodation and access to local schools, health services and support networks can significantly affect children’s wellbeing and family life. Reviewing the treatment of households with children, including the suitability of upper-floor flats and the treatment of children’s disability benefits in financial assessments, will help ensure the policy supports fair and child-aware decision-making.
- 11.5 The economic implications relate to how the allocation policy supports access to housing for households who need to live, work, provide care or maintain family connections in Shropshire. Reviewing local connection, hardship, employment-related housing need and key worker criteria will help the Council consider how the policy can support local communities and the wider economy while continuing to prioritise statutory housing need.
- 11.6 Any changes to income, savings and asset thresholds should be considered carefully so that the policy reflects local affordability while recognising the limited supply of social housing. Increasing thresholds may allow more households to qualify for lower bands, but it will not increase the number of homes available and may create higher expectations or additional administrative pressure.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 There are clear equality and diversity implications because the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme determines who can join the housing register, how housing need is assessed, how priority is awarded and how scarce social housing is allocated. Changes to qualification criteria, local connection, income and asset thresholds, banding, direct lets or nomination arrangements may affect applicants differently depending on their circumstances and protected characteristics.

- 12.2 A full equality impact assessment should be completed before any major policy changes are adopted. This should consider the potential impact on disabled applicants, older people, children and families, pregnant applicants, care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse or violence, Armed Forces households, applicants with medical or welfare needs, people requiring adapted or specialist accommodation and households facing rural access barriers.
- 12.3 A review of local connection rules must be carefully framed to avoid unlawfully excluding or disadvantaging applicants who should be protected by statute or guidance. This includes people fleeing domestic abuse, care leavers, Armed Forces households, applicants owed relevant homelessness duties and other reasonable preference groups.
- 12.4 Changes to income and asset thresholds should also be assessed for equality impacts, particularly where disability-related costs, children's disability benefits, household size, caring responsibilities or specialist accommodation needs affect an applicant's realistic ability to secure suitable accommodation in the market.
- 12.5 The revised policy should include clear wording on reasonable adjustments, accessible communication, authorised representatives, review rights and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Registered providers and other partners acting under the scheme should also understand their role in applying the policy fairly and consistently.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 The review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme has limited direct climate change, biodiversity or environmental implications, as its primary focus is the review of a Policy. The policy determines how social and affordable housing is prioritised and allocated, rather than directly commissioning, developing or managing housing stock.
- 13.2 There are some indirect environmental considerations arising from the rural nature of Shropshire. Allocation decisions that take account of local connection, hardship, employment, caring responsibilities and access to services can help households remain connected to schools, health care, support networks and employment, potentially reducing unnecessary travel and supporting more sustainable community outcomes.
- 13.3 The review may also support better use of existing adapted and specialist housing stock through clearer exceptional matching and adapted property processes. Making best use of existing homes can support both resident wellbeing and efficient use of housing resources.
- 13.4 Any future operational or policy changes should continue to consider whether the location, suitability and availability of homes support stable tenancies, community connection and access to local services. This is particularly important in a rural county where transport access and distance to services can affect both wellbeing and environmental outcomes.

13.5 Overall, no significant direct climate change, biodiversity or environmental impacts are identified at this stage. Any future proposals arising from the policy review that have direct property, transport, commissioning or development implications should be assessed separately through the Council's normal governance and environmental assessment processes.

14. Background Papers

14.1. None

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Current Shropshire Housing Allocations Policy

Appendix B – Suggested Discussion Areas

Appendix C – Glossary

Appendix B – Suggested Discussion areas:

- Does Scrutiny support a full review of the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy and Scheme to ensure it remains lawful, transparent, fair, consistently applied and aligned to current housing need, homelessness pressures, affordable housing supply and the wider Housing Strategy review?
- How should the revised policy balance statutory housing need and reasonable preference duties with wider local priorities, including homelessness duties, key workers, care leavers, domestic abuse, adapted housing need and households with strong rural or community connections?
- Should Shropshire move to a closed housing register, where applicants must evidence a local connection before joining, or retain an open register where applicants with no local connection remain in Band 7? What statutory exemptions and safeguards would be required?
- Should the policy include a clearer rural allocation criterion to support local people accessing local homes, particularly in smaller settlements where housing need is linked to family, employment, caring responsibilities, schooling, support networks or long-standing community connection?
- Should the Council review the income, savings and asset thresholds? If so, how should affordability be evidenced, including local income levels, private rent levels, mortgage accessibility, household size, disability-related costs, children's disability benefits and the availability of suitable alternative accommodation?
- Should the Council be able to use direct nominations, direct lets, management transfers or exceptional matching to meet urgent statutory, safeguarding, adapted property or specialist housing needs?
- What safeguards, governance and audit arrangements are needed for shortlisting, bypassing applicants, direct lets, nominations, exception decisions and cases where homelessness duties apply, so decisions remain transparent, lawful, consistent and capable of review?

Appendix C – Glossary:

Statutory Homeless Duty

A statutory homelessness duty is a legal obligation placed on a local authority to provide advice, assistance, and in some cases accommodation, to eligible people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in accordance with homelessness legislation.

Prevention Duty

The Prevention Duty is the legal duty on a local authority to take reasonable steps to help an eligible person who is threatened with homelessness within 56 days to retain their accommodation or secure alternative housing so that homelessness is avoided.

Relief Duty

The Relief Duty is the legal duty on a local authority to take reasonable steps to help an eligible person who is homeless secure suitable accommodation and relieve their homelessness.

Hazards

A hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is any risk to the health or safety of an occupier arising from a defect, deficiency, or condition within a dwelling, building, or surrounding area.

Hazards are assessed according to the likelihood of harm occurring and the potential severity of the outcome. They are then classified as:

- Category 1 Hazard – a serious hazard requiring local authority intervention.
- Category 2 Hazard – a less serious hazard where local authority intervention is discretionary.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

CBL systems are a method of allocating social and affordable housing that allows eligible applicants on a housing register to actively express an interest in available properties that are advertised. Properties are advertised on a regular cycle, and applicants are able to bid for homes that match their assessed housing need, eligibility and preference criteria. Applications are prioritised in accordance with the local authority's allocations policy. CBL systems are designed to provide transparency, choice and customer involvement in the allocation process, enabling applicants to make informed decisions about where they wish to live while ensuring that social housing is allocated fairly and in accordance with housing legislation and local priorities.

Direct lets

The allocation of a social housing property to a specific applicant without the property first being advertised through the Choice-Based Lettings process. Direct lets are typically used in exceptional or urgent circumstances where there is a clear operational, legal or welfare reason for bypassing the normal bidding process.

Management transfers

A move arranged by a social landlord to relocate an existing tenant to another property where there is a compelling management, welfare or operational reason to do so. Unlike a standard transfer or choice-based lettings allocation, a management transfer is usually considered outside the normal bidding process)

Nomination arrangements

When operating with nomination agreements, the nominee is selected by the Council (rather than choosing the property) in accordance with the council's Allocation Policy, taking account of housing need, eligibility and priority.