



Report to **Cabinet**

Subject **Allocations Policy**

Date **2 March 2006**

Author **Area Housing Manager**

1. Purpose of the Report

To identify to Members the proposed changes to the allocations policy. The need for these changes has resulted from the following four areas: -

- The Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation.
- The Code of Guidance on the Homelessness Act 2002.
- Practical issues which have been identified over the last 12 months.
- Consultation with tenants which has identified tenants wishes that the Council incorporate policies aimed at eliminating anti-social behaviour.

2. Background

The review of the allocations policy has taken place in response to the two codes of guidance, issues raised by staff, Members, tenants and residents relating to the allocation of properties, coupled with the need to be more proactive when dealing with proven anti-social behaviour. Accordingly this report outlines the proposed changes to the allocations policy.

3. Changes Identified

The following changes have been developed through consultation with tenants, Members, staff and key stakeholders.

I. Eligibility for housing

It has been identified that the Council needs to introduce more checks and balances before accepting people onto the housing register to protect both the local community and the Council's property. The proposed checks cover the following areas: -

1. Obtaining references from former landlords about the conduct of the tenancy.
2. Checking to see if the applicant(s) owe any money to the authority.
3. Expanding the definition of anti-social behaviour to include convictions for violent crimes.
4. Introducing a 'Test of Unacceptable Behaviour' to determine whether or not someone who has behaved anti-socially should be excluded, whether or not they were a tenant at the time. Please see appendix A
5. Checking the condition of transfer applicant's properties.
6. Checking that the applicant could cope independently, or that support services can be accessed where necessary.

It will be necessary for the checks to have been successfully completed before the application can be registered.

II. Accuracy of the housing register

Currently we allow applicants to register but to place their application on hold until they require re-housing. This appears to be at odds with our allocations policy which focuses on the provision of housing for those in need. This allows people to sit on the housing register effectively earning 'waiting time' as applicants are considered in date order, consequently when they do decide to request re-housing they will often jump to the top of their priority band. To overcome this issue it is proposed that the housing register should only contain those applicants who are currently in need of housing.

If approval is granted, all those applicants who are currently 'on hold' will be contacted and their housing situation discussed in detail. Should it be found that they do not currently wish to be housed their applications will be removed from the housing register.

III. Number of offers

Currently there is no limit on the number of offers that can be made to applicants. This can considerably increase the amount of time that it takes officers to allocate properties and leads to a situation where-by applicants stay on the top of the list receiving multiple offers, sometimes for substantial periods of time. The proposal to overcome this issue is that in future applicants in the Urgent band (these are usually statutorily homeless applicants) would be made one offer in

accordance with the homelessness procedures, if this offer is refused their application will be re-considered as if they were not under threat of homelessness and banded (prioritised) accordingly.

In all other cases a maximum of three offers of accommodation will be made to applicants. The offers will match the preferences indicated on their housing application form regarding the size of property (providing they qualify) and the area of preference. In these cases, following a third refusal the application will be suspended for a period of 1 year.

The policy would however be revised to allow officers to make “tentative” offers to applicants which may not be within their chosen areas, but may be of interest to them, hence assisting with lower demand properties.

In all cases applicants would continue to have the right to request reviews and appeals to the decisions being made should they wish to.

IV. Property size as opposed to property type

The Council currently faces considerable problems when allocating family accommodation. In the majority of cases, families, particularly those with children would prefer to be accommodated in houses rather than flats. There is therefore a tendency for applicants to opt to wait (sometimes for years) for a house rather than accept a flat. In view of the Council’s limited stock it would be unrealistic to disregard flats as being suitable accommodation for families. Accordingly it is therefore proposed that offers and allocations should be made in accordance with the property size alone rather than size and type.

V. Re-Housing applicants with medical needs.

Currently applicants who have an evidenced medical condition requiring an urgent move to ground floor accommodation can select either a ground floor flat or bungalow. The majority select bungalows and inevitably wait a considerable length of time for an offer. This would appear to be at odds with their housing situation, which dictates the need to move urgently. To improve this situation it is proposed to class all ground floor accommodation as suitable, hence an applicant with medical problems would be offered either a ground floor flat or a bungalow, considerably reducing the time they have to wait to be rehoused. Equally if an offer of a ground floor flat were refused then consideration would need to be given to the status of the application with a view to reducing the level of priority. This decision would be subject to the right of the applicant to challenge the decision in accordance with current policies and procedures.

VI. The use of Introductory Tenancies

Introductory Tenancies last for 12 months, after which the tenancy becomes secure unless the Council gains possession of the property or has started proceedings to do so. The process of obtaining possession by the Council differs from that involving secure tenants as the court **must grant possession** to the authority if it is satisfied that the notice has been served correctly and the tenant has had the full opportunity to review the council's decision to serve notice.

Introductory tenants have basically the same responsibilities as secure tenants, but they do not have the following legal rights

- Right to take in lodgers
- Right to sub-let
- Right to exchange
- Right to improve
- Right to vote prior to transfer to a new landlord
- Right to buy

The implementation of Introductory Tenancies would not have a direct impact on current tenants of the authority, but would enable the authority to act more quickly in the event of any evidenced anti-social behaviour by an Introductory Tenant. It would also help to provide a service, which more closely meets the expectations of our tenants and residents.

VII. Rent arrears and debts

Where applicants have an outstanding debt, i.e. rent arrears, they would be required to clear the arrears before being offered rehousing, or in exceptional circumstances have made and kept to a repayment schedule.

VIII. Succession rights

A person is qualified to succeed to the tenancy if he/she occupies the dwelling house as his/her only or principle home at the time of the tenant's death and either

- a) Is the tenants spouse or civil partner, or
- b) The tenants heterosexual partner or another member of the tenant's family and has resided with the tenant throughout the period of 12 months ending with the tenants death;

Unless in either case the tenant him/herself was a successor.

Upon succession, if the property is larger than would reasonably be required by the

successor and his/her family, the authority may make 3 offers of alternative, suitable accommodation. If these offers are refused then the authority would commence possession proceedings under Ground 16 of the Housing Act 1985.

IX. Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The authority utilises a disabled adaptations budget to carry out works to council properties, which have been identified by the Occupational Therapists as necessary to assist the disabled person(s). There is considerable demand for adaptations and the Occupational Therapists prioritise the workload. The new adaptations policy introduces measures to help manage the budget whilst also providing a more equitable service, which makes the best use of the authorities stock.

X. Sensitive Lettings Policy.

When the council is making several allocations e.g. to new housing association developments, or where several properties become available at the same time or where there is a high turn over of stock, steps will be taken to provide a balanced number of allocations, taking into account issues such as child density and the age of applicants. The purpose of this is to encourage the development of community spirit and reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour etc.

XI. Special Circumstances

To enable the department to respond quickly to extenuating circumstances, which are not covered elsewhere in the policy, there is scope within the new policy for the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to award a greater priority to an applicant to enable them to be rehoused more urgently.

These changes have been suggested to improve the accuracy of the housing register, make the best use of the councils limited stock and improve the quality of life for tenants and residents alike.

4. Proposals

To adopt the new allocations policy incorporating the changes to the existing policy as described above, incorporating a full review of the current housing register to be repeated on an annual basis. (A copy of the revised policy can be found at appendix B)

5. Resource Implications

Costs can be met within existing budgets

6.Consultation

The suggested changes have been discussed with the following organisations.

- Registered Social Landlords
- Current Housing Register Applicants
- Social Services
- The Tenants Consultation Panel
- Councillors

6. Recommendation

That approval is granted for the implementation of the new allocations policy, with an implementation date of April 2006.

Appendix A

In line with the 'Code of Guidance for local authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation' (issued 11/02), the following three-stage test will be applied where GBC believes that an applicant may be guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant: -

- i) GBC will consider whether it is reasonable that a possession order would be granted under s.84 Part 1, Schedule 2, Housing Act 1985, where actually or notionally the applicant had been a secure tenant of the authority. 'Reasonable' means having regard to the interests of the parties and the interests of the public.
- ii) Having concluded that a possession order would be granted, GBC will then need to be satisfied that this would not be suspended.
- iii) GBC will then consider whether this behaviour was unacceptable at the time of the application. Previous unacceptable behaviour may not justify a decision to consider the applicant as unsuitable where that behaviour can be shown to have improved.

Appendix B

Gedling Borough Council
Housing Services Department
Draft Allocations Policy
August 2005.

Contents

1. Eligibility for Housing	3
2. References	3
3. Assessing the Application	3
4. Banding of Applications	3
- Special circumstances	5
- Letting of property	5
- Number of offers	6
- Type and size of accommodation	6
- Temporary offers of accommodation	8
- Sustainable lettings policy	8
- Type of tenancy	8
5. Information and Guidance	9
- choosing areas	9
- Who will house you	9
6. Change in circumstances	10
7. Giving false information	10
8. When joint applicants separate	10
9. Assignment	10
10. Housing Transfers	11
11. Mutual Exchanges	11
12. Succession	12
13. Termination of Tenancy	13
14. Review of the Housing Register	13
15. Equal Opportunities	13
16. Right of Appeal	13

17. Service Standards	14
18. Service Satisfaction	14

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. ELIGIBILITY FOR HOUSING REGISTER

Anybody over the age of 16 years can apply to the Council to be allocated housing and be entered onto the Council's Housing Register. This includes secure existing tenants wishing to transfer.

The following are not eligible for the allocation of housing and therefore will not be entered onto the Council's Housing Register :

- a) Applicants or one applicant in the case of joint applicants who do not satisfy the habitual residency test (see Asylum & Immigration Act 1996)
- b) Applicants or one applicant in the case of joint applicants subject to immigration control (see the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996)
- c) Applicants or their household members who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour sufficient to continue to make them unsuitable as a tenant.

Where the Housing Manager is satisfied that special or exceptional circumstances exist, they may in their absolute discretion decide not to exclude a person who falls within the above categories.

These notes are provided for the guidance of applicants. Each application will be determined on its own merits and nothing in this guidance should be taken as a full and final definition of eligibility.

2. REFERENCES

The Council may request references from an applicant's former landlord(s).

3. ASSESSING THE APPLICATION.

On receipt of an application the form will be assessed against the criteria detailed in each band below. Gedling Borough Council operates a system of placing Applicants into bands according to their assessed application.

3.1 Bands

There are five bands in which applications will be placed; URGENT, HIGH, GENERAL, RESERVE and HELD.

3.1.a. Urgent Band

Persons placed within this band will normally meet the following criteria. Those persons that the Council has accepted a duty to under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, Sections 190, 192, 193, 195 or 197, 198 referrals, as amended by the 2002 Act and relevant legislation. This band will also include those Applicants who are determined as being either statutorily overcrowded, in a property, which is statutorily unfit, or applicants who are currently in hospital cannot be discharged due to the unsuitability of their accommodation, or those who as a direct result of a significant change in their health are no longer suitably housed. Applicants could receive either temporary or permanent offers of accommodation.

3.1.b. High Band

Persons placed in this band will normally meet the following criteria:

- i) High medical or social needs – difficult to continue living in present accommodation or obtaining suitable accommodation for their medical or social needs. NB all ground floor accommodation is considered to be suitable for medical needs, not just bungalows.

Examples of which are, but NOT limited to:

ASSESSED cases of:

- Serious Racial harassment
 - Serious Sexual harassment
 - Serious Social Overcrowding
 - Serious Anti-social behaviour
 - Serious Health problems
 - Lack of basic amenities
 - Immanent, evidenced loss of accommodation (within 6 months)
- ii) Clearance areas and areas of regeneration (see Housing Act 1989)
 - iii) Under-occupation i.e. where a tenant in social housing may have spare bedrooms in their existing property which when realised would result in the provision of family housing in areas of high demand.
 - IV) Homelessness applicants who are residing in temporary accommodation, and are awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation.
 - V) Applicants in temporary accommodation which does not meet the Current occupancy standards detailed in 4.4.

3.1.c. General Band

Persons placed in this band will be those whose circumstances have not met the criteria for Urgent, High or the Reserve band. It is anticipated that the majority of Applicants will fall into this band.

3.1.d. Reserve Band

Persons placed in this band will normally meet the following criteria:

- i) Owner-occupiers
- ii) Applicants via the HOMES Mobility Scheme(s);
- iii) Applicants not currently residing in the Gedling Borough Council area, not including armed forces personnel who previously lived in the Borough prior to their application;
- iv) Applicants identified as having sufficient financial resources to buy/rent suitable accommodation on the open market.
- v) Applicants, or one applicant in the case of joint applicants, who have previously been evicted

It is anticipated that applicants in this band will only be offered accommodation once the lists from Urgent, High and General Bands have been exhausted.

3.1.e. Held Band

Persons placed in this band will normally meet the following criteria;

- i) They have refused three offers of accommodation which matched their requirements;
- ii) They have been evicted by the authority for rent arrears. The application will be held until the rent arrears-excluding court and other costs- are paid in full.
- iii) Current tenants-applying for transfer- who are in breach of the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement, or in rent arrears-until the breach is remedied or the arrears are paid off.

3.2 Special Circumstances

Where an Applicant has special circumstances not specifically addressed elsewhere, the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, has the discretion to allow Applicants onto the Housing Register, and to determine the Applicant's priority banding on an exceptional basis.

A tenancy will not be offered if an Applicant shows a lack of competence with daily living that precludes holding down a tenancy even with support services.

4. LETTING OF PROPERTIES

4.1 Date Order

Applicants will be considered within each band in date order i.e. the person waiting the longest within their band will, usually, be made the next offer of suitable accommodation, whilst balancing this with the need to make the best use of the Council's stock.

The Council will let all of its properties with the aim of satisfying the following criteria:

- The Council's statutory responsibilities;
- Having regard to the housing need of those Applicants who might otherwise not be able to help themselves;
- Offering informed choice to Applicants on its Housing Register,
- Maximising rental income by not allowing properties to stand empty by ensuring that properties are offered quickly.
- Making the best use to adapted properties.
- Making the best use of the Authority's stock.

4.2 Order of letting

In order to meet the above criteria, a property will;

- 4.2.a. Initially be offered to Applicants of whom the property would reasonably meet their needs, in the URGENT BAND, until all such Applicants in this band have been exhausted. With priority being given to those homelessness applicants in unsuitable accommodation, as per the definition at 4.4
- 4.2.b Then be offered to Applicants of whom the property would reasonably meet their needs, in the HIGH BAND, until all such Applicants in this band have been exhausted.
- 4.2.c. Then be offered to Applicants of whom the property would reasonably meet their needs, in the GENERAL BAND, until all such Applicants in this band have been exhausted.
- 4.2.d. Then be offered to Applicants of whom the property would reasonably meet their needs, in the RESERVE BAND.

4.3 Number of offers

All applicants in the Urgent band will be made one offer of accommodation, if refused there application will be placed in the High band.

Applicants in the High, General and Reserve bands will receive a maximum of 3 offers of property, which are suitable for their needs and match their preferences indicated in their application form. If the third offer is refused the application will be placed on hold for one year, in the HELD band.

The Council may approach Applicant's about properties, which they have not identified on the housing application form, but which the council think the Applicant may be interested in. These will be classed as "Tentative" offers and will not count towards the 3 offers.

4.4 Type and size of accommodation offered.

Accommodation will normally be offered according to an Applicant's needs as follows, and will be based on the number of bedrooms as opposed to the type of property. For example a person requiring a two bedroomed ground floor property would be offered either a two bedroomed ground floor flat or bungalow.

a)	ELDERLY – single	Flatlet or 1 bedroomed flat or Bungalow either warden aided or non warden-aided
	ELDERLY – couple	1 or 2 bedroomed flat or bungalow – Either warden aided or non-warden aided
b)	FAMILY – one child	2 bedroomed house or flat
	FAMILY – two children	2 or 3 bedroomed house or flat
	FAMILY – 3 or more children	3 or 4 bedroomed house
c)	TWO PERSON	1 or 2 bedroomed flat
d)	SINGLE PERSON	Flatlet or 1 bedroomed flat
e)	MEDICAL GROUNDS	Applicants requiring re-housing to

ground floor accommodation on medical grounds will be offered either ground floor flats or bungalows

In cases where there is a lack of accommodation of the appropriate size, the Council may offer larger accommodation depending on the Applicants needs and the availability of such accommodation.

Approved foster carers and prospective adoptive parents requiring accommodation will be considered to have children, with relevant supporting evidence.

Where Applicants have a live-in carer, a bedroom will be provided for their use.

The Council will attempt to offer accommodation in an Applicant's chosen areas.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL APPLICANTS ARE SPECIFIC ABOUT STATING THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY WANT TO LIVE.

THIS WILL ENSURE THAT THE COUNCIL DOES NOT MAKE OFFERS, WHICH THE APPLICANT IS NOT INTERESTED IN, AND THAT THEY ARE NOT BYPASSED FOR A PROPERTY THE APPLICANT MAY OTHERWISE HAVE TAKEN.

4.5 Temporary offers of accommodation

For Applicants that the Council has accepted a duty to under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, Sections 190, 192, 193, 195 or 197,198 referrals, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 Act, and relevant legislation, the temporary accommodation offered may be one bedroom size smaller than as prescribed in 4.4 above.

4.6 Sustainable lettings Policy

When the Council makes several allocations e.g. to new housing association developments, or where several properties become available at the same time or where there is a high turn over of stock, steps will be taken to provide a balanced number of allocations, taking into account issues such as child density and the age of Applicants. The purpose of this is to encourage the development of community spirit and reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour, and to enable the Council to make the best possible use of the stock available.

4.7 type of tenancy offered

Introductory Tenancies

All Applicants including those to whom the Council has accepted a duty to rehouse under the homeless persons legislation and who are non-secure tenants, be offered an Introductory Tenancy. Introductory Tenancies are part of a package of measures designed to assist the Council in dealing with anti-social behaviour. Existing secure tenants transferring or exchanging to another Council property and existing Assured Tenants of a Housing Association and other registered Social Landlords will be offered a secure tenancy and not an Introductory Tenancy.

The Introductory Tenancy will last for 12 months, after which the tenancy will become secure unless the Council had gained possession of the property or had started proceedings to do so. On applying for possession, the Court **must grant possession** to the Council if it is satisfied that a notice has been served correctly and the tenant has had a full opportunity to request a review of the Council's decision to serve notice.

Introductory tenants have basically the same responsibilities as secure tenants, but they do not have the following legal rights :-

- Right to take in lodgers
- Right to sub-let
- Right to exchange
- Right to improve
- Right to vote prior to transfer to a new landlord
- Right to buy

Non – Secure Tenancies

Non-secure tenancies could be offered to those Applicants to whom the Council has accepted a duty to rehouse under the homelessness legislation. They will remain non-secure tenants until an offer of an Introductory Tenancy is made in accordance with section 4.

5. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

5. How many properties can an Applicant consider?

5.1 ALL Applicants within the URGENT band will be made ONE reasonable offer of accommodation. Reasonable is defined as:

- Fit to live in
- Suitable for any specific needs, e.g. proven medical needs
- Free from fear of violence

If this offer is refused the Application will be placed in the High Band.

5.2 All Applicants in the High, General and Reserve band will be made a maximum of 3 suitable offers. If all three are refused then their application will be placed on hold for 1 year.

5.3 An applicant in the High, General or Reserve band will not be advised of other vacancies once they have expressed an interest in a property, and are waiting for the keys to that property.

5.4 The Council will usually allow an Applicant 24 hours to decide whether or not they are interested in the property they have been offered. This is to ensure that the Council lets properties as quickly as possible.

5.5 The start date of the tenancy will be determined by the day the Council offered the property :-

- If an offer is made on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday the tenancy start date will go back to the Monday date.
- If an offer is made on a Thursday or Friday the tenancy will start on the following Monday.

6. How many areas can an applicant register for?

Applicants for housing in the High, General and Reserve bands will be allowed to register for suitable accommodation anywhere within Gedling Borough. Applicants can choose as many areas as they wish.

7. Who will house the Applicant?

An Applicant on Gedling Borough Council's Housing Register can be offered, or advised of accommodation, either directly by the Council or by nomination to a Housing Association (Registered Social Landlord), or by arranging a letting in the private rented sector, unless the Applicant indicates otherwise on their application form.

8. Change of circumstances

To ensure an Applicant does not receive offers of accommodation, which they do not want, they are required to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances that may affect the application.

If you are unsure as to how a change in your circumstances may affect your housing situation, please contact the Housing Services department on 0115 901 3652

9. Giving false information.

Where the Council allocates a property on the basis of false or incomplete information supplied by an Applicant, or their partner or representative, the Council will recover possession of the property.

10. When joint applicant's separate

10.1 Elderly & Two-person applications

- Both parties will retain the accumulated waiting time in full and the band will be re-assigned based on the individual's circumstances.

10.2 Family

- The application will be continued in the name of the parent with whom the child(ren) live for all, or the majority of the week, either by voluntary arrangement or by Court Order. The other party can make an application in their sole name and will be awarded the waiting time accrued.

If the Council amends your entry on the Housing Register you will be notified.

11. Assignment

Assignment, the transferring of the interest in a tenancy from a tenant to someone else, or from a sole tenancy to a joint tenancy or from a joint tenancy to a sole tenancy is only possible in the following circumstances :-

- A court has made a Property Adjustment Order within a divorce, civil partnership dissolution or child care proceedings.
- A tenant exchanges their home with another tenant of a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord and the Council have approved the exchange in writing – see Mutual exchange section 14.
- Assignment to a person who would legally be entitled to succeed to the tenancy i.e. a spouse or same sex civil partner,
a partner who has resided with the tenant for 12 months,
a member of the tenants family who has resided with the tenant for 12 months
and provided always the tenant had not previously succeeded to the tenancy or had the tenancy assigned to them.

12. Housing Transfers

If an existing secure tenant wishes to apply for a transfer, then they must have held their secure tenancy for at least 12 months, however in the case of emergencies this requirement could be waived at the discretion of the Head of Housing Services.

Prior to existing tenants being advised of available accommodation, or being made an offer of accommodation, a home visit will be made to ensure that the tenants are complying with the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement. If the tenants are in breach of the tenancy agreement, e.g. in rent arrears or allegations of anti social behaviour have been made, or it is suspected that the tenant is not residing in the property as their only and principal home, then no offer of accommodation will be made unless and until the breach has been resolved. The application will be placed on hold until the matter has been resolved.

13. Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchanges are a way for a Council tenant to swap their home and tenancy conditions with another Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association) tenant. Exchanges can be a quicker way for a tenant to move.

Exchange registers are kept at the Housing Reception in the Civic Centre, Arnold and at the enquiry office at Cemetery Lodge, Carlton.

Only secure tenants have the right to exchange and a tenant must obtain the Council's permission, which will be subject to the following criteria:

- § Both tenants must have a clear rent account
- § A home inspection will be undertaken by the Council, and must be satisfactory
- § The new home must be of an appropriate size and type to meet the needs of the tenant(s) family.
- § The property has not been adapted.
- § Neither tenant is in breach of their tenancy conditions.

The Council will send a written decision in response to a request to exchange within 42 days, of the council having received the application.

If a tenant wishes to place their name on the register for a mutual exchange, they should contact the Housing Office on 0115 901 3652. They can also advertise their wish to exchange, for example in a local Post Office, etc.

A tenant **MUST** obtain written permission from both the Council and the other landlord, if a tenant is exchanging with another Council or Registered Social Landlord, before an exchange can take place.

On a mutual exchange the tenant accepts a higher level of responsibility for the repairs to the property, as the tenant is responsible for any work and non standard items which the previous tenant installed, e.g. showers, internal doors etc.

14.Succession.

On the death of a joint tenant, the tenancy will become a sole tenancy in the surviving tenant's name by survivorship.

On the death of a sole tenant, if there had not previously been a succession to the tenancy then :-

His / her spouse or the Tenant's Civil Partner who lived in the property as their sole and principle home will succeed or,

The Tenant's partner, or another family member, such as a son or daughter, or close relative who has resided with the deceased tenant for at least the previous 12 months, ending with the date of death, will succeed

Upon succession, if the property is larger than would reasonably be required by the successor and his/her family, the authority may make 3 offers of alternative, suitable accommodation. If these offers are refused then the authority may commence

possession proceedings under Ground 16 of the Housing Act 1985.

15. Termination of tenancy

A tenant must give at least 4 weeks written Notice to Quit to end their tenancy. The period of the notice must end on a Sunday.

In the case of joint tenants, either one can end the tenancy by giving the Council 4 weeks written notice.

All keys should be returned to the One Stop Shop at the Civic Centre, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU, at the latest before 12.00pm on the Monday immediately after the tenancy ends.

If the Council does not receive the keys the tenant will be charged further **monies**.

Equally if the property has not been thoroughly cleared, or the Council considers that some of the repairs required are not as a result of fair wear and tear then the tenant will be recharged for these items.

16. Review of the housing register

Applications on the Housing Register will be reviewed annually from the date of application. This is to enable the Council to ensure the application is banded correctly.

Failure to return the annual review form will usually result in the application being cancelled. In these circumstances if you re-applied at a later date you would lose the time already accrued within your band.

17. Equal Opportunities

The Council is committed to Equal Opportunities and aims to ensure that no part of the community shall be denied access to or receive a poorer service on the grounds of their gender, disability, ethnic or cultural background, age, marital status, religious or political persuasion, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, or HIV / Aids.

18. Right to appeal

An Applicant who considers that their application has not been placed in the correct band, or is dissatisfied with any decision may request a review of the decision. A formal request in writing to review the decision, explaining why the decision is incorrect should be made within 28 days of the notification of the decision and be addressed to the Area Housing Manager. If you require assistance in making this request, please phone 0115 901 3652.

We will endeavour to reply to your request within 21 days from receipt of your letter.

19. Service Standards

The Council will write to acknowledge receipt of the housing application within 20

working days.

The acknowledgement will confirm the date of application and the band allocated.

If the application requires further assessment, the Council will write detailing the information required. NB this could prolong the assessment period.

20. Service Satisfaction.

Any comments, compliments or complaints about any aspect of this service can be made using the Council's "Compliments and Complaints" procedure which is available from the Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU or by phoning 0115 3652