

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 21 October 2014

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D. Stallan

**Subject: Annual Review of Protected Characteristics
– Housing Applicants and Lettings**

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That no recommendations be made concerning amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, due to the Review of the Protected Characteristics of housing applicants and lettings as current figures do not show a significant disparity between the Protected Characteristics of applicants on the Housing Register, and those allocated accommodation through the Housing Register.

Report:

1. In previous years, the Housing Scrutiny Panel has undertaken an annual review of the ethnicity of applicants on the Housing Register, and compared this with the ethnicity of those allocated accommodation, to consider if there is any disparity and whether there should be any resultant changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme. To date, no such disparities have been identified.

2. Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty in 2011, public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, shaping policy, and delivering services. Under the Act there are nine "Protected Characteristics" which must be considered as follows:

Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy and Maternity
Race
Religion and Belief
Sex
Sexual Orientation

3. Due to the requirements of the Act, the Housing Scrutiny Panel is now asked to include within the annual review, a review of the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers on the Housing Register compared to the Protected Characteristics of those allocated accommodation. This is to consider if there has been any disparity, and to identify whether or not there are any indications to suggest the Council may be discriminating against any one group and if as a result, any changes should be made to the Housing Allocations Scheme.

4. The statistical information set out in the tables below for 2013/2014 monitors the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014, being the same 12 month Review period for both the Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy. For comparative purposes, in terms of ethnicity, the figures for the financial year 2012/2013 are provided.

Ethnic origin of applicants on the Housing Register

Ethnic Group	2012/13	2013/14
White British/Irish	5,113 (73.64%)	1,410 (90.22%)
Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian	65 (0.94%)	24 (1.54%)
African/Caribbean	275 (3.96%)	35 (2.24%)
Mixed Race	97 (1.4%)	43 (2.75%)
Other	437 (6.29%)	21 (1.34%)
Not Stated	956 (13.77%)	30 (1.91%)
Total	6,943 (100%)	1,563 (100%)

Ethnic origin of Homeseekers housed in Council accommodation

Ethnic Group	2012/2013	2013/14
White British/Irish	281 (78.9%)	274 (89.25%)
Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.33%)

Ethnic Group	2012/2013	2013/14
African/Caribbean	4 (1.1%)	8 (2.61%)
Mixed Race	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.65%)
Other	12 (3.4%)	3 (0.97%)

Not Stated	55 (15.4%)	19 (6.19%)
Total	356 (100%)	307 (100%)

5. The breakdown of the ethnicity of the population of the District is set out in the table below for information (source EFDC Census 2011):

Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage (%)
White: British/Irish	107,836	86.5
White: Other e.g. European etc.	5,033	4.04
Asian: Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian/Chinese/Sri Lankan	5,922	4.76
African/Caribbean	2,404	1.93
Mixed: Multiple Ethnic Groups in one household	2,649	2.12
Other non-British	815	0.65
Total	124,659	100

Other Protected Characteristics

6. The following tables set out the monitoring of six of the remaining Protected Characteristics for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014, being the same 12 month Review period for both the Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy. Statistics are not available for Marriage and Civil Partnership, and Pregnancy and Maternity. Furthermore, as this is the first annual review of these Protected Characteristics, information from the previous year is not available.

Protected Characteristic - Religion	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/14 (Housing Register)
Buddhist	Nil	5 (0.32%)
Christian	169 (56.12%)	812 (51.95%)

Hindu	Nil	2 (0.13%)
Muslim	3 (1%)	25 (1.60%)
No Religion	57 (18.9%)	361 (23.09%)
Other	30 (10%)	124 (7.93%)
Not stated	48 (14%)	234 (14.98%)
Total	307 (100%)	1563 (100%)

Protected Characteristic - Gender Re-assignment	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/2014 (Housing Register)
Gender Re-assignment	Nil	6 (0.38%)
Non- Gender Re-assignment	231 (75.24%)	1,268 (81.12%)
Not stated	76 (24.76%)	289 (18.50)
Total	307 (100%)	1,563 (100%)

Protected Characteristic - Sexual Orientation	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/2014 (Housing Register)
Bi Sexual	4 (1.30%)	11 (0.70%)
Gay/Lesbian	4 (1.30%)	4 (0.26%)
Heterosexual	223 (72.8%)	1,157 (74.02%)

Not stated	76 (24.60%)	391 (25.02%)
Total	307 (100%)	1,563 (100%)

Protected Characteristic - Disability	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/2014 (Housing Register)
Physical	42 (13.68%)	203 (12.98%)
Learning	11 (3.58%)	78 (4.99%)
Visual	9 (2.93%)	40 (2.56%)
Mental Health	55 (17.92%)	226 (14.46%)
Hearing	12 (3.90%)	42 (2.69%)
None or Not stated	178 (57.99%)	974 (62.32%)
Total	307 (100%)	1563 (100%)

Protected Characteristic - Age (years)	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/2014 (Housing Register)
18-39	144 (46.9%)	932 (59.63%)
40-49	46 (14.97%)	249 (15.93%)
50-54	27 (8.8%)	80 (5.12%)
55-59	18 (5.9%)	57 (3.65%)
60 and over	72 (23.43%)	245 (15.67%)
Total	307 (100%)	1563 (100%)

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Protected Characteristic - Sex (Lead Applicant)	2013/14 (Housed)	2013/14 (Housing Register)
Male	107 (34.85%)	521 (33.33%)
Female	200 (65.15%)	1042 (66.66%)
Total	307 (100%)	1563 (100%)

7. Generally, the statistics confirm that the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers housed in Council accommodation is similar to those on the Housing Register. It is therefore recommended that no amendments are made to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, due to the Review of the Protected Characteristics of housing applicants and lettings.

8. In previous years, when undertaking this Review the Panel have considered the ethnicity of applicants on the Housing Register awaiting sheltered accommodation compared to those allocated sheltered accommodation. Due to the increased statistical monitoring required in order to meet with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, this information is not included this time. Although there is no requirement to monitor sheltered accommodation separately, as this is considered good practice, officers will explore the possibility in the future of monitoring all Protected Characteristics of homeseekers awaiting sheltered accommodation compared to those housed.

Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies

9. The following table sets out the ethnicity of those allocated Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014.

Ethnic Group	2013/14
White British/Irish	18
Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian	3
African/Caribbean	1
Other	2

Not Stated	5
Total	29

Reason for decision:

10. Although a large number of housing applicants do not disclose their Protected Characteristic, it is evident from the analyses shown in the report that the Protected Characteristics of those on Housing Register mirrors the allocation of vacancies sufficiently for the Council to be confident that its Housing Allocations Scheme does not racially discriminate, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, no adjustments to the Housing Allocations Scheme are recommended.

Options considered and rejected:

11. Not to consider the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers on the Housing Register compared to those housed, in order to determine if there has been any disparity and whether any changes should be made to the Housing Allocations Scheme.

Consultation undertaken:

12. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be updated on the report at their next meeting.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: None

Personnel: None

Land: None

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1985; Housing Act 1996; Localism Act 2011

Background papers: Housing Allocations Scheme circulated separately

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision reference: (if required) Not a key decision.