



**CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS
Allocations Policy and Procedures**

APPENDICES

November 2007

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Appendix 1 - Performance

Performance will be assessed through the following framework, with detailed measures being developed for inclusion in future versions of the Policy appendices:

- National and local Performance indicators
- Benchmarking exercises and peer review
- Service Standards: joining the housing register, advice & assistance, bidding, viewing and accepting a property
- Learning from customers, including customer satisfaction with the service, and with opportunities for involvement with developing and improving the service
- Cost and value for money information

Appendix 2 - Monitoring

Examples of data to be collected for performance monitoring include:

- The number of applications, lettings and refusals (including reasons) by:
 - area and property type, and
 - ethnicity, age, disability and support need
- Demographic data on the local population in order to compare proportional representation
- The number of suspensions by reason, ethnicity, age, disability and support need
- Bidding patterns
- Non bidders
- Average relet times
- Nominations to Housing Associations

Appendix 3 – Checks and References

On application we will make a number of checks in order to verify the applicant's details before an offer is made. These include:

- We will request a reference from a current landlord for Council or Housing Association tenants.
- If the applicant has had a previous Council or Housing Association tenancy in their own name or with a partner they may be asked to supply a reference from that landlord to show that they conducted the tenancy in a satisfactory manner.
- We will carry out checks to verify previous addresses.

- We will carry out checks regarding current and previous criminal convictions, within the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We will carry out pre offer checks, which may include a visit to the place the applicant currently lives.
- We will make appropriate enquiries to find out if the applicant or any person who will live with them has breached tenancy conditions in the past, including non-payment of rent and/or other charges, including Council Tax.
- We will check to make sure that the applicant has not purposefully worsened their circumstances to obtain more priority on their application.

If getting a landlord's reference is likely to cause problems the applicant should contact Rykneld Homes for advice. We might ask for other information for example a rent book or Council Tax details.

For every applicant on the application form we must see at least **two** of the following forms of proof of identity, and proof of current address:

- full birth certificate;
- medical card;
- marriage certificate;
- driving licence;
- National Insurance card;
- passport;
- benefit book

Proof of address can be made by providing a recent bank statement, Council tax bill or a recent utility bill.

Photocopies will NOT be acceptable.

Appendix 4 - Detailed Definitions of Bandings

Assessments of priorities and bandings will be made by Rykneld Homes assessment officers and verified by a senior officer.

In bands 1 and 2, priority is time-limited. At the end of the time limit, the application will be reviewed.

Referrals for priority can be made directly by the applicant, an advocate, support worker, carer, other officer or anyone working in a professional or advisory capacity with the applicant.

BAND ONE – Emergency/Very Urgent Need

(Review of priority is required after a 3 month time limit).

Local connection normally required

1. Homelessness

Where an applicant has been found to be homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless; and the Council has a legal duty to secure accommodation for them, they will be awarded band 1 priority.

Homeless households will be assessed by the Council under relevant legislation and the local connection requirement will usually, but not necessarily apply in some cases.

If the applicant has come through this route and has not been offered a home before the end of the 3 month time limit, the priority will be reviewed and a final offer will be made as soon as possible – in practice by a proxy bid made by Council officers. If the applicant refuses this offer (which must be reasonable) the priority will be cancelled and the Council's statutory duty discharged.

2. Domestic abuse

An applicant can be assessed for priority if it is essential that they move because:

- a. they have been treated violently or threatened with violence by their partner or someone else who lives with them; or
- b. they have been treated violently or threatened with violence at or near the property by a former partner or someone else who is known to them, and who does not live with them in the property.

The policy applies equally to men and women and to people in same-sex as well as heterosexual relationships. It also applies to applicants who are abused by household members other than spouses or partners. It applies equally to applicants in all tenures.

If the applicant is a Council tenant and the perpetrator is not a tenant (or eligible to be joint tenant) then the applicant must quit the home when they are re-housed. Anyone who remains in the home will be treated as an unauthorised occupier.

3. Critical and/or crisis medical needs

Priority may be given if applicants suffer ill-health which is aggravated by their housing conditions and which would be helped by a move elsewhere. Further information is included in Appendix 5 Medical Needs Assessments.

Circumstances will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Physical Health:
 - Crisis or volatile situation, requiring re-housing in the very near future in order to avoid serious repercussions on health.
 - Serious physical dysfunction or deterioration.
- Mental illness/learning disability:
 - High risk or actual breakdown.
 - To live in ordinary housing is essential to avoid loss of life.
 - Serious mental dysfunction or deterioration.
- Environment:
 - Life threatening situation developing if not re-housed away from existing home/neighbourhood.
 - Dangerous or unsafe physical environment

4. Special cases

An applicant may be considered for special case priority if they have:

- a. an urgent and immediate need for housing, the circumstances of which are exceptional and are not covered by the allocations policy; or

b. cumulative or multiple band 2 needs; where the applicant (or a member of their household) has a number of needs which when assessed in isolation would not indicate a very urgent need; or

c. the applicant's current home poses a significant risk to life or health and immediate re-housing is essential. Such a special case, will in practice, be deemed a "discretionary let".

BAND TWO - Urgent Need

(Review of priority is required after a 12 month time limit).

Local connection required

1. General Medical needs

Priority may be given if applicants suffer ill-health which is aggravated by their housing conditions and which would be helped by a move elsewhere. Further information is included in Appendix 5 Medical Needs Assessments.

Circumstances will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Some actual risk, or concern about potential risk, to physical safety and functional ability. Unable to be improved unless by alternative property design/ layout
- Increased level of stress/distress to applicant, where the current accommodation contributes to severe social isolation and restricts independence; and where re-housing is required to prevent deterioration. This will only be awarded if the inability to cope is solely and directly related to housing.
- Reliance on others to maintain care or a carer in need of support.
- Clear evidence of significant health improvement if re-housed, particularly where poor surroundings may affect or worsen the illness and re-housing would be the only way to improve the situation of the applicant.
- Potentially unsafe physical environment.

2. Applicants with significant care needs

These may include people with chaotic lifestyles, mental health needs, learning disability, long-term health problems, community care or related health problems and people leaving supportive hostels; where re-housing would improve health or promote independent living.

Applicants may be assessed for priority if they are ready to leave hospital or other institutional care and they have:

- spent a long time in hospital or institutional care; or
- had repeated stays in hospital or institutional care; **and**
- have no permanent accommodation to return to.

Applicants may also be assessed for priority if:

- They have been discharged into the care of their family but this accommodation is unsuitable for their needs; or
- They have been discharged into temporary accommodation other than a supportive hostel; or
- They have not been in hospital long term, but require a full needs assessment and care package to enable them to live independently in permanent accommodation; or

- They have significant mental health or other health problems that are being caused or exacerbated by their housing situation and this can be resolved by urgent re-housing.

In all such cases, priority will only be awarded if:

- Rykneld Homes is satisfied the applicant is capable of living independently; **and**
- any necessary support needed for the applicant to live independently will be provided

3. Overcrowding

Applicants may be given priority where the household is statutorily overcrowded in accordance with relevant legislation; currently the Housing Act 1985.

Subject to compliance with overcrowding legislation, only people who have lived in the property as their permanent full time residence for at least 6 months, and babies born into the household, can be considered within the overcrowding assessment. Additionally, if any member of the household has given up suitable housing, they will not be included when an assessment of overcrowding is made.

Applicants who are overcrowded, but whose overcrowding can be resolved by one household within a larger household moving to another property, are expected to resolve their housing need by bidding for properties using the most appropriate household's registration.

4. Applicants with support needs

Applicants may be assessed for priority if they need to move to be nearer to family or friends in order to give or receive a high level of essential support. Priority may only be given where a high level of support is both needed and will be given. Priority will only be given if:

- there is evidence that a high level of support is needed and, without that support, the applicant would have serious problems in their daily life; **and**
- the person giving the support confirms that they are already giving a high level of support or will give it if one of the parties moves nearer; **and**
- a move will greatly cut or ease the travelling time needed to give or get support.

Priority will not usually be given where a primary carer already lives with or near to the applicant. However, this can be considered where a move is essential in order to support a primary carer who has other people for whom they are responsible. For example, where one partner needs a high level of care and the spouse provides this but there are also young children in the household. In this case, priority will only be awarded to enable one secondary carer's household to move. Priority cannot be awarded to more than one household.

If an applicant with a high level of support needs lives with others who provide that support, they can ask to be assessed for priority so they can live independently but remain within reach of supportive family and friends or of alternative agency support. This policy covers people who are not tenants (or eligible to be joint tenants) or owner-occupiers.

If the support is provided by an agency, the agency must confirm that the applicant needs a high level of support and will be given that support if they move. It must also be shown that the applicant cannot get this support where they live now.

An applicant cannot be awarded priority just so they can be near particular services or facilities.

Priority will only be given for an area that will resolve the housing need.

5. Racial and other harassment

Harassment includes conduct which deliberately interferes with the peace, comfort or safety of any persons and/or members of their households, such as incidents of graffiti, damage to property, abuse, threats or physical attacks.

Racial harassment includes violence, which may be verbal or physical, and which includes attacks on property as well as the person, suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds or there is evidence of racism.

We will always tackle the perpetrator, and wherever possible support the victim in remaining in their home. However, re-housing priority may be given to the victim. **Further work is currently being undertaken to develop procedures to assess re-housing priority. These will link with anti social behaviour strategies.**

6. Anti social behaviour – re-housing options for the victim

Anti social behaviour includes conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person, or member of their household for whom they are responsible, or impacts negatively on a residents' quality of life in and around their home.

We will always tackle the perpetrator and wherever possible support the victim in remaining in their home. However, re-housing priority may be given to the victim. **Further work is currently being undertaken to develop procedures to assess re-housing priority. These will link with anti social behaviour strategies.**

7. Young people and the Children Act 1989

Young people under the age of 21 who are, or were, in the care of the Local Authority (generally Children's Services) on or after their 16th birthday may be given priority. Care leavers will not be accepted without a rent guarantee from Children's Services which lasts until they are 18.

16 and 17 year olds, who have been assessed by or on behalf of Social Services as in need under the Children Act 1989, may be given priority. Rykneld Homes must believe that a satisfactory assessment of need has been made, the young person is able to live independently, and that any and all necessary support will be given.

Priority will only be given for a home and area that will enable the necessary support to be provided.

8. Vulnerable young people aged 16 and 17

Subject to meeting the criteria below, vulnerable young people aged 16 and 17 who are not care leavers and who are potentially homeless will be given a priority. Rykneld Homes, the Council and Children's Services must be satisfied that the young person:

- is able to live independently;
- is able to sustain a tenancy; and
- has an identified package of support available to them.

9. Lacking in basic amenities

Applicants in self-contained accommodation which lacks the basic amenities of:

- Bath or shower
- Internal toilet
- Kitchen
- Hot Water

10. Moves that release a high demand Council property for re-letting

Where a Council tenant is giving up a 'high demand' home they can apply for priority for a transfer to a home with fewer bedrooms.

The normal definition of a high demand property is any home with 3 or more bedrooms or a bungalow with 2 or more bedrooms. However, this will vary based upon different localities, and a more flexible approach will be used where appropriate. Priority will only be given where the tenant will be giving vacant possession of their current home;

11. Release of disabled or elderly persons property

Priority may be awarded for re-housing where applicants live in a Council home built or adapted for a person with a disability, or suitable for an elderly person, and where the property is no longer occupied by anyone needing such a home.

12. Applications under the "Tenants Incentive and Adaptation Transfer Scheme"

Some Council tenants who are in need of adaptations may chose to apply for a transfer to more suitable accommodation. There are particular procedures and also financial incentives which are applicable. Separate rules apply to assessment of applicants within this category, which can be found within the following documents:

- Adaptations to A Council Home Procedure
- Executive Committee Report 30th January 2002: Adaptations to Council Properties

Applicants within this category will be monitored by Rykneld Homes. Where appropriate, and in agreement with the applicant, proxy bids may be made by Rykneld Homes' officers.

13. Council employees with tenancies tied to their employment, who are retiring or leaving employment.

These tenants are treated as being on the housing register from the date they began that job. If they were already on the housing register before becoming an employee, they will keep that registration.

Priority is given if a move is needed to release the home:

- for a new jobholder because the employee retires, resigns, or is redeployed; or because they have died and their partner must move; or
- for redevelopment, demolition or sale where the site is being disposed of.

If employment ends, and the home is not needed for a new employee, the former occupant may be allowed to stay in their home if they wish to do so, provided:

- the home would form part of the general housing stock; and
- they meet the letting criteria for the property, returned to the general housing stock.

If the applicant has not been offered a home at the end of the time limit the priority will be reviewed and a final offer will be made by proxy bid by Rykneld Homes' officers. If the applicant refuses this offer, the priority will be cancelled.

14. Re-designation of older persons properties

Council tenants aged 60 or over may be given priority if they currently live in a block of homes designated for people over 60, and the block is re-designated with no age restriction. Blocks where a further age restriction is applied e.g. applicants over 50 years of age, will not attract such eligibility. The priority can only be used to access a home designated for people who are over 60.

15. Development work in Council owned homes & "Decant" pools for Council tenants affected by development work.

If a Council tenant's home is having major improvement or repair work carried out they may be moved temporarily into a decant property. The appropriately authorised Senior officer will withdraw from the letting pool, one or more properties. These will be dealt with as "Discretionary Lettings".

Temporary homes will be offered on the same estate or as near as possible to the tenant's home. These temporary moves may be arranged if:

- a. a member of the household is a shift worker;
- b. there are strong medical reasons why the household cannot cope with the building works;
- c. a member of the household is under one year of age;
- d. the gas, electricity or water has to be disconnected for a long period;
- e. the size of the household and age of the people in it would make it difficult for them to live in the home during the work; or
- f. the home is in a block of flats, and the household will be unreasonably disturbed by work in other flats.

Once the work is finished, the tenant would normally be expected to return to their permanent home.

16. Cumulative Band 3 Needs

Where the applicant (or a member of their household) suffers from a number of needs, which when assessed in isolation would normally result in an applicant being placed in band 3, they may be considered for band 2.

BAND THREE – Moderate needs (No time limit)

1. Low level overcrowding – bedroom deficiency

Households who do not meet the overcrowding criteria in band 2, but where the combination of the home size they currently live in, and the number of occupants, is having a negative effect on quality of life. For example, where two children share a very small bedroom; or where living accommodation is used for sleeping.

- Married or co-habiting couples, or single parents do not have their own bedroom.
- Two children of the same sex, aged 16 or over, or opposite sex children each aged over 8, share a bedroom.

- More than 2 children share a bedroom.

2. Private sector tenants with insecurity of tenure

Evidence of tenancy agreement and/or status required.

3. Children in flats

Tenants of first (and above) floor flats who have children, but no access to a private garden or designated communal play facilities.

4. Applicants in housing need from outside the district & MoveUK applicants

Applicants without any local connection who otherwise meet the criteria of Band 1 or 2.

Includes direct applicants from outside the district who complete a standard application form and applicants referred through 'MoveUK', a Government scheme to facilitate re-housing across local authority boundaries, for example for employment reasons or to give or receive support.

Direct applicants from outside the district will be assessed using the criteria and definitions under Band 1 & Band 2 and if they would have otherwise have fitted either of these categories, then they will be awarded Band 3.

MoveUK Applicants will be assessed in accordance with current national rules, including consideration of a report from the Council or Housing Association where applicants currently live. If accepted, applicants will be awarded band 3.

5. Shared Accommodation and Lodging

Applicants who share the use of kitchen and bathing amenities with other households. This includes applicants who are living in shared accommodation with close family relatives (For example, parent, sibling, child but does not include persons adequately housed such as a son living with his mum and dad who has his own bedroom).

6. Special circumstances

For example, families with children with special needs who may need to be near a particular educational school, or foster parents who need a larger home to enable them to continue as fosterers

BAND FOUR – General Needs (No time limit)

This band will include applicants with none of the specific housing needs included in bands 1, 2 and 3, but who wish to be re-housed.

Appendix 5 - Medical Needs Assessments

If an applicant thinks that their current home is unsuitable due to their medical or mobility needs they may ask to be assessed for medical needs. If the state of repair of the home is adding to these problems, where possible, the home should be repaired before re-housing can be considered. The ability to adapt a home, where appropriate, will also be taken into account.

The assessment will be carried out by an independent medical advisor or agency approved for the purpose.

An applicant must apply to go on the Housing Register and their application will be initially awarded banding without the medical assessment in the first instance. Whilst under consideration applicants will be able to bid on applicable homes whilst their medical assessment is being considered.

Rykneld Homes will accept referrals from a support agency/carer on the applicant's behalf. On application a medical assessment form will be sent to the applicant for them to complete or for their representative to complete on their behalf (family member, friend or support agency).

The completed form should be returned to any Rykneld Homes Housing Office or to Choice Move, Council House, Saltergate, Chesterfield, S40 1LF. The form will be checked to ensure that it has been completed correctly; an officer will visit the applicant to obtain clarification, further information and verification of the applicant's circumstances. Liaison between Rykneld Homes and any support agency or representative (family member, friend or carer) may be required.

The Medical Assessment application form will ask for authorisation from the applicant for the Medical Advisor to contact the applicants GP, if necessary.

Once Rykneld Homes are satisfied that all relevant information has been received to enable the Independent Medical Advisor to make a recommendation the Medical Assessment form will be sent by fax or electronically to the Medical Advisor for comment. The recommendation will be returned by the Medical Advisor within 10 working days via email and a final decision will be made by Rykneld Homes.

Once Rykneld Homes has made a decision the Housing Application records will be updated and the applicant informed of the decision in writing.

Assessment of any medical priority will be determined under two levels and banding will be given appropriately:

Crisis/Critical: Band 1
General: Band 2

Details are contained within the banding notes in Appendix 4.

Medical banding may be given to applicants where:

- They are being discharged from hospital and their home is totally unsuitable for their needs; or
- The design of their current home means they cannot use essential facilities within their home without significant difficulty or help; or
- The design of their current home means they cannot get into or out of their home without significant difficulty or help; and
- A move to a different type of property would resolve these difficulties or alleviate them significantly.
- There is a fully-assessed need to move on the grounds of disability or ill-health.

If an applicant with medical needs lives with others in a home which is not suitable for their specific medical or disability needs, they can ask to be assessed for priority so

they can live independently. This policy covers people who are not tenants (or eligible to be joint tenants) or owner-occupiers, who live in the North East Derbyshire District

Some applicants with mobility needs for a specialist or ground floor home may wish to move, although they are already suitably housed from a mobility perspective. If they are over 60 they will be advised to bid for ground floor flats and bungalows.

If they are aged under 60, they will not meet the letting criteria for some of the ground floor flats, bungalows and disabled persons properties. In these cases their registration will be amended to qualify them for these homes so that they can bid for them on equal terms with applicants who are over 60.

Priority will only be given for a housing type that will resolve the housing need. For example, if an applicant is awarded priority for ground floor property because the stairs in their current home present a barrier, the priority will be limited to ground floor homes only. They cannot use it to bid for a house or maisonette.

In some instances the applicant may have specific needs for a specialist home (for example, a 3 bedroom disabled persons property or adapted house) that has not become available during the time limit. In these instances, the priority may be extended.

Appendix 6- Band Quotas

The current Quotas for each band are as follows:

Band 1:	25%
Band 2:	45%
Band 3:	20%
Band 4:	10%

Appendix 7- Additional Lettings Criteria

a) Minimum age for any offer of a home

This will normally be 16 (other than for some designated flats, bungalows and sheltered housing schemes).

b) Minimum age for some flats and bungalows

All bungalows will be designated as one or more of the following:

- Available to applicants over a certain age – currently 60
- Available to applicants who have been assessed as meeting medical or special needs criteria

All blocks of flats will be designated as:

- Available to applicants over a certain age
- Sheltered with a specified age – over 60s only
- Available to applicants with no children under 16 years of age, except for any children living with them sometimes under access arrangements
- Available to applicants who have been assessed as meeting medical or special needs criteria.

Where homes have a minimum age limit, every attempt will be made to offer the home to someone above the minimum age. If there is no one who meets the minimum age limit we may consider sensitive lets to younger applicants.

- c) **People with mobility priority** will be considered first for some ground floor flats, bungalows and adapted houses. Homes with aids and adaptations will be restricted to applicants with mobility needs in the first instance.
- d) **Extra Care Housing Schemes for older persons provide for** tenants needing varying levels of care and support. For vacant homes in these schemes, other agencies, including Social Services, will be involved in setting the lettings criteria and making the final offer decision. Eligibility criteria will apply and will be detailed in the advert, as will the method of determining the offer.
- e) **Four bedroom and larger properties** are in short supply in most areas of the district. In order to make the best use of these 4 bedroom properties, households with a band 1 priority and who need a 4 bedroom or larger home to resolve their housing need will be considered first. In addition to band priority, applicants will be shortlisted in order of the number of people in the household.
- f) **A woman with a confirmed pregnancy** will be counted as a household with a child upon the birth of that child and receipt of the birth certificate. If an applicant already has one child, the unborn baby will be treated as if it were the same sex.
- g) **Access arrangements** for children following relationship breakdown can only be taken into account for children under the age of 16.
- h) **Size of household** The size and type of home applicants can normally apply for depends upon the size and make up of their household. A person who is over 16 will be considered as requiring a separate bedroom.

When a member of an applicant's household is in prison, this person may be included in the household for the purposes of the letting criteria 4 weeks before their confirmed release date from prison.

Homes may be let to households of a size or type that don't meet the usual lettings criteria; for example if this is a need identified through a local lettings plan, or where there are no applicants who fit the criteria.

Guidance

TABLE 1 of Section 7 of the allocations policy provides general guidance on Property sizes / types and qualifying household size. This table details the type of home we would normally offer dependent on size of household.

In some areas and localities where there are shortages of particular types of housing, and where the applicant's circumstances do not fit the general guidance, discretion may be exercised by Rykneld Homes. Examples of this would be:

- Childless couples may be eligible for 2 bedroom properties in some areas where there are no flats.
- Where particular types of home are in short supply, or there is a local or rural lettings plan; the advert may state that applications can be accepted if the criteria is not met, but people who meet the criteria will be considered in the first instance.
- Single people with access arrangements to several children
- Local and rural lettings plans will also have other rules, which may apply.

Appendix 8- Procedure for Sorting Bids

BAND 1: Homes advertised with preference to Priority band 1:

- i. Applicants with a priority band 1 are considered first.
- ii. Where there is more than one applicant with a priority, then the longest priority waiting time is first. This priority waiting time may be different from the original registration date as priority may have been awarded due to a later change in circumstances.
- iii. Where there are two or more applicants with the same band 1 waiting time, then the earliest registration date will be first (see note ii. above).
- iv. Where there are no suitable applicants with a priority band 1, then the property will be cascaded through the bands, in order 2, 3, 4. Offer will be determined under the same method as steps (i) to (iii) above.
- v. For home with a minimum age limit we will make every attempt to offer the home to someone above the minimum age. However, if there are no suitable applicants we will consider offering it to other applicants who have bid but do not meet the minimum age limit.
- vi. Where there are no suitable applicants at all, it will be re-advertised with a relaxation of the letting criteria being considered.
- vii. If there are no applicants at all, the home will be advertised in the following bidding cycle with relaxed criteria and allocated to the highest banding first and effective date second.

BAND 2: Homes advertised with preference to Priority band 2:

- i. Applicants with a priority band 2 are considered first. Applicants in band 1 will not get any initial priority when they apply for these homes.
- ii. Where there is more than one applicant with a priority, the longest priority band 2 waiting time is first. This date may be different from the original registration date as priority may have been awarded due to a later change in circumstances.
- iii. Where there are two or more applicants with the same band 2 waiting time, then the earliest registration date will be first (see note ii. above).
- iv. Where there are no suitable applicants within priority band 2, then the home will be cascaded through the other bands, in order 1, 3, 4. Offer will be determined under the same method as steps (ii) to (iii) above.
- v. For homes with a minimum age limit we will make every attempt to offer the property to someone above the minimum age. However, if there are no

suitable applicants we will consider offering it to other applicants who have bid but do not meet the minimum age limit.

- vi. Where there are no suitable applicants at all, homes will be re-advertised with a relaxation of the letting criteria being considered.
- vii. If there are no applicants at all, the home will be advertised in the following bidding cycle with relaxed criteria and allocated to the highest banding first and effective date second.

BAND 3: Homes advertised with preference to band 3:

- i. Applicants in band 3 are considered first. Applicants in bands 1 and 2 will not get any initial priority when they apply for these homes.
- ii. Where there is more than one applicant in band 3, then the longest waiting time is first. This date may be different from the original registration date as priority may have been awarded due to a later change in circumstances.
- iii. Where there are two or more applicants with the same band 3 waiting time, then the earliest registration date will be first (see note ii. above).
- iv. Where there are no suitable applicants within band 3 the home will be cascaded through the bands, in order 1, 2, 4, using the effective date in each case.
- v. For homes with a minimum age limit we will make every attempt to offer the property to someone above the minimum age. However, if there are no suitable applicants we will consider offering homes to other applicants who have bid but do not meet the minimum age limit.
- vi. Where there are no suitable applicants at all, homes will be re-advertised with a relaxation of the letting criteria being considered.
- vii. If there are no applicants at all, the home will be advertised in the following bidding cycle with relaxed criteria and allocated to the highest banding first and effective date second.

BAND 4: Homes advertised with preference to band 4:

- i. Applicants in band 4 are considered first. Applicants in bands 1, 2 and 3 will not get any initial priority when they apply for these properties
- ii. Where there is more than one applicant in band 4, then the longest waiting time is first.
- iii. Where there are no suitable applicants within band 4 the home will be cascaded through the bands, in order 1, 2, 3.
- iv. For homes with a minimum age limit we will make every attempt to offer the property to someone above the minimum age. Therefore, if there are no suitable applicants we will consider offering it to other applicants who have bid but do not meet the minimum age limit.
- v. Where there are no suitable applicants at all, homes will be re-advertised with a relaxation of the letting criteria being considered.
- vi. If there are no applicants at all, the home will be advertised in the following bidding cycle with relaxed criteria and allocated to the highest banding first and effective date second.

General – short-listed applicants who are “tied” at the top of a band

In the unusual circumstances of a “tie” in any band; (that is, where two (or more) applicants are at the top of the same band and have exactly the same amount of waiting time and the same registration date) then the successful applicant will be determined by a panel of two senior officers, including the appropriate Rykneld Homes service manager. It may be appropriate, in such circumstances to offer the ‘unsuccessful’ applicant a ‘*discretionary let*’, if appropriate stock is available, although this will not always be possible or practical in every circumstance.

Appendix 9- Offer Procedure

All offers will be made by telephone and if accepted confirmed in writing the same day. If we cannot make contact or an applicant does not respond within 2 working days of us sending a letter we will withdraw the offer and the property will be offered to the next person in line.

We will arrange for an accompanied viewing of the property first. Following this viewing, applicants will have up to 24 hours to make a decision.

If an offer is refused, we will ask for, and monitor, the refusal reasons in order to help improve the service.

Appendix 10- CBL Inclusion Strategy - Procedures

Further work is currently being undertaken to develop these procedures.

Appendix 11 – Local Lettings Plans

A local lettings plan is an agreement between the Council, Rykneld Homes and local tenants and residents that restricts lettings in the area to certain households. This is done to tackle a specific issue or problem that has been identified locally, at block, street, estate or neighbourhood level.

Local lettings plans allow the Council and Rykneld Homes to:

- Identify and explore the barriers to accessing housing.
- Deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents.

The plans may consider:

- The proportion of people with formerly chaotic lifestyles
- Existing child density
- Adapted homes
- The need to create balanced and sustainable communities
- A maximum or minimum age limit for certain homes
- A requirement for a local community connection
- The proportion of customers who do not rely solely on benefits for the payment of their rent
- Specific housing management reasons. For example, age designation of certain homes where particular problems have arisen.

Four key elements will be considered when developing a new local lettings plan:

- Selective lettings. There may be some restrictions as to who can apply for certain properties or areas. For example this may involve age restrictions or a requirement to have a local connection.
- Making the best use of housing stock.

- Developing a balanced and sustainable community to promote community cohesion and balance the needs of existing and new tenants in order to create more inclusive neighbourhoods where people want to live. This may be in areas where there is a high turnover of homes either within an estate or amongst certain property types.
- Attract potential tenants - for example certain homes may be offered with a furnished or part-furnished package attached.

Key stages of development

- **Developing a stock and demand profile of the area**

This may include a breakdown of and information on:

- Property types and numbers
 - Household type
 - Voids and lettings within the last financial year
 - The numbers of, and reasons for, refusals
 - Reasons why tenants are leaving, and applying for the area
 - The number of transfer requests to leave an area
 - The level of demand for properties in the area
 - How long tenancies are lasting
 - How quickly vacancies are filled
 - The layout of the area and services available
 - Any specific social issues within the area, including any multi-agency involvement, such as neighbourhood management approaches.
 - An estimate of vacancies expected
 - Local targets for performance
- **Involving and consulting customers**
Rykneld Homes will consult with residents and existing tenants, and involve them in the development of any proposals for local lettings plans. Partner landlords who have stock within the area will be consulted regarding the need or otherwise for a local plan.
 - **Evaluating the information**
Rykneld Homes and the Council will evaluate the information in the stock and demand profile and will take account of customer views when identifying recommendations to develop local lettings plans. Diversity and equal opportunity issues of local communities will also be considered when formulating local lettings plans, and an equality and diversity impact assessment will be carried out.
 - **Making recommendations**
Recommendations may include some of the following criteria:
 - Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties.
 - Preference to applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area.
 - Preference to applicants who are giving or receiving support to or from family, voluntary agency, day care, play groups or other locally based organisations.
 - Preference to people who are economically active
 - Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the Council's letting policy - eg. This could be couples without children, where there is a high density already in the area of families with children.

- Preference to specific groups of people for specific types of home or in specific localities where this would benefit the community.
- Meeting the needs of certain groups of people to ensure most appropriate use of stock.

- **Impact of Local Lettings Plans on the Lettings Policy**

In considering adoption of a local lettings plan, Rykneld Homes and the Council will take into account the impact of overall lettings in the district. Any home subject to a local lettings plan will be clearly labelled within the advertisements.

- **Review of local lettings plans**

Rykneld Homes will ensure that Local Lettings Plans are publicised, monitored, and reviewed annually with the involvement of local tenants and residents.

Appendix 12 - Rural Lettings Plan

Background

Many local residents of the villages and parishes within the scope of the Rural Lettings Plan are experiencing problems accessing affordable housing. House prices have increased considerably during recent times; pricing many would be owner-occupiers out of the market. The already low provision of Council housing in these rural areas has been diminished by rising levels of Right to Buy sales.

Therefore in rural areas where affordable housing is becoming scarce, the Council has chosen South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA) as a partner to receive family houses (the plan does not include bungalows and flats) in these areas under a trickle transfer arrangement. SYHA will invest to improve these homes for letting to local people nominated by the Council and Rykneld Homes. The partnership is also working with Parish Councils and others to develop a better understanding of the detailed needs at a village level, and to facilitate new affordable housing developments. This will ensure that communities are sustainable in the long term, with access to amenities and affordable housing, through both 'trickle transfer' and new housing provision.

The following villages and parishes are covered by the Rural Housing Plan;

Village	Parish
Ashover	Ashover
Kelstedge	Ashover
Littlemoor	Ashover
Brackenfield	Brackenfield
Cutthorpe	Brampton
Wadshelf	Brampton
Holmesfield	Holmesfield & Barlow
Barlow	Holmesfield & Barlow
Holymoorside	Holymoorside & Walton
Woolley Moor	Stretton
Wessington	Wessington

Aims & Objectives of the Rural Housing Plan

This Rural Lettings Plan has been prepared to ensure that local people in the identified villages within the scope of the plan have access to housing within the area, where they can demonstrate a local village connection.

The objectives of the Rural Housing Plan are:

- To create and maintain sustainable communities
- To ensure that the needs of the local community are reflected within the policy
- To give people a chance to remain close to their roots and have access to affordable housing

Plan Operation

The Council, through its negotiations, has secured 100% nomination rights in perpetuity from its housing register. A Nomination Agreement has been signed by both parties. This ensures that whenever a home becomes available for letting, the Council is able to nominate a housing applicant from its own housing register.

All potential nominees will go through the same checks and references that would have been carried out before being offered the tenancy of a Council property.

At an appropriate time, before the works are complete, SYHA contact the Council and request a nomination from the housing register in order to make an offer of accommodation on a home whilst it is undergoing refurbishment works. During this period the applicant will be offered a limited amount of decoration choices on the first letting in terms of paint colour, colour and pattern of counter-tops and floor coverings in the kitchen and bathroom areas. To enable this to happen, SYHA will facilitate a 'pre-allocation' of the home to the Council's nominee

The Rural Housing Plan and Choice-Based Lettings

Further work is currently being undertaken to develop and finalise this rural housing plan, and nomination arrangements within CBL

In essence the Rural Housing Plan is a form of local lettings plan; an agreement between the Council and local tenants and residents which restricts lettings of houses in the area to certain households.

The process of determining the nomination has the following stages:

The initial stages 1 to 4 relate to the CBL process of marketing and bidding

Stage 1: Advertising

On availability, each house will be advertised via the CBL system. The normal bid cycle of one week deadline would be applied, unless otherwise agreed.

Stage 2: Labelling

Within the advert the house would be labelled "*rural lettings plan criteria applies*" as the key criteria, with a brief explanation of eligibility & procedures. Any additional home or applicant criteria and preference would then be detailed.

Stage 3: Bidding

Applicants who are on the housing register, and have completed an additional rural housing plan form, which details residency, can bid for the house in the normal ways

Stage 4: Shortlisting

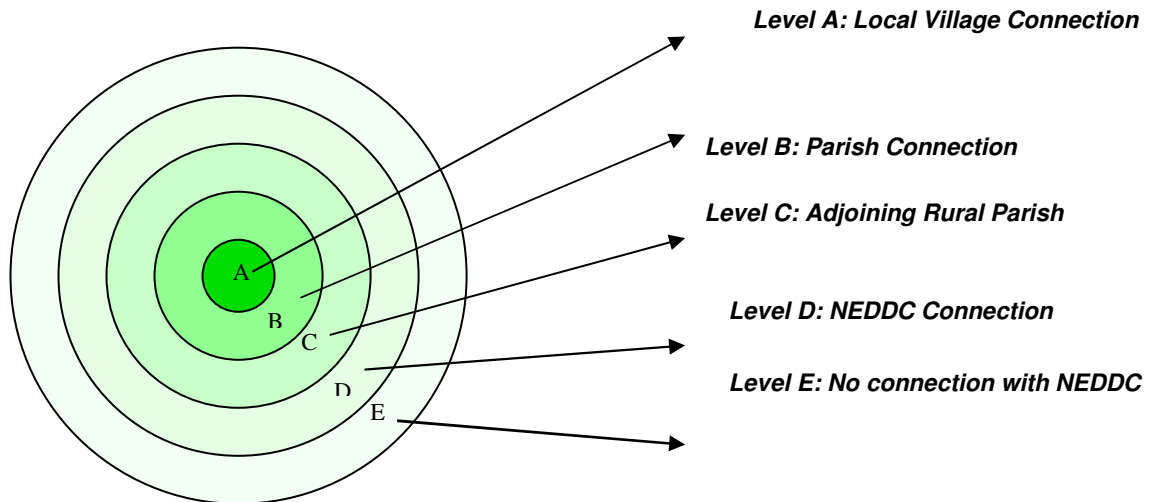
Following the deadline, a short-list will be generated, which will then be ordered using the principles of the agreed rural housing plan.

The following stages 5 to 7 relate to sorting the bids and determining the offer/nomination:

Stage 5 : Defining the village connection

Following the deadline, bids will be sorted into priority using a “5 levels of consideration principle”. This principle works on a ‘concentric circle’ approach, the 5 levels being:

- Level A) Village Connection
- Level B) Parish Connection
- Level C) Adjoining Rural Parish
- Level D) District Connection
- Level E) No District Connection



For these levels A to E, cascading through these levels will determine the initial priority. Level A applications will be considered first, with level B applications only being considered where there are no level A applications, or when all level A applications have been exhausted; continuing in the same manner through the other levels if necessary. Having determined the initial priority level, progress to stage 6 will be required where there is more than one applicant within the level.

Stage 6: Defining hierarchy through village connection sub-category

If, following the initial sort in stage 5, there is more than one application within a level, then hierarchy will be determined as set out below. Within each priority level A to E, sub categories are again taken in descending order. Applicants at higher levels will be considered first, followed by cascading down the sub categories if there are no applicants or if all applicants within a sub category have been exhausted.

Level A) Local Village Connection

This category of applicants will have a DIRECT connection with the village in which a home is available for letting.

Sub categories are as follows:

A1) Present Residency

These are applicants that currently live in the village and have expressed a wish to remain in the village.

A2) Past Residency

Past residents - but only if they moved out of the village between 1st November 2002 and 31st October 2004 because their housing need could not be met in the village due to property lettings being on hold. This will only apply to people who had to move due to their property not being big enough for their family needs i.e. an expectant applicant in a flat needed a house, applicants in a 2 bedroom house needing 3 bedrooms. Please note that this will not apply to people who move house on the Tenants Incentive Scheme for adaptation purposes.

A3) Employment

As working in the village contributes to its economic viability, applicants who hold down secure and regular employment in that village and have to travel to work will be classed as having a local VILLAGE connection. Confirmation of full-time employment must be given by the employer and provided by the applicant to support their application.

A4) Support

Applicants either giving support to someone living in the village or receiving support from someone in the village will be awarded this level of consideration. They must, however, be the main provider/receiver of the support and must support such a claim by producing documentation such as carers' allowance. The applicant must be the named person either giving or receiving care.

Level B) Parish Connection

Sub categories are as follows:

B1) Present Residency

These are applicants who will live in the same PARISH as the home ready for letting. For example, an applicant residing in Ashover would be considered as having a PARISH connection to a house in Kelstedge or Littlemoor as they are all in the same parish, and a resident of Barlow would be considered to have a parish connection to Cutthorpe.

B2) Past Residency

Past residents - but only if they moved out of the PARISH between 1st November 2002 and 31st October 2004 because their housing need could not be met in the PARISH due to property lettings being on hold. This will only apply to people who had to move due to their property not being big enough for their family needs i.e. an expectant applicant in a flat needed a house, applicants in a 2 bedroom house needing 3 bedrooms. Please note that this will not apply to people who move house on the Tenants Incentive Scheme for adaptation purposes.

B3) Employment

As working in the PARISH contributes to its economic viability, applicants who hold down secure and regular employment in that PARISH and have to travel to work will be classed as having a PARISH connection. Confirmation of full-time employment must be given by the employer and provided by the applicant to support their application.

Level C) Adjoining Rural Parish

This level includes applicants who live in an adjoining rural parish to the village where the house is available. Sub categories in this category are:

C1) Present Residents of the adjoining rural parish who wish to remain living locally

C2) Past Residency - Residents who have had to move away, due to a lack of available homes within the village, parish or adjoining parish, and who wish to return.

Level D) District Connection

Applicants not living in a village covered under the Rural Lettings Policy or one that adjoins the village where a home is on offer, but living within the boundaries of North East Derbyshire District Council will be classed as having a District Connection.

Level E) Living outside the district of North East Derbyshire

Applicants living outside the boundaries of North East Derbyshire District Council will be classed as having no connection to the area.

Stage 7: determining the nomination:

If, following the initial sorts in Stages 5 & 6, there is more than one applicable applicant(s), then hierarchy will be determined as follows:

1. Longest connection (on the basis of full years only)
2. Highest Band (as per section 9 of the general policy)
3. The applicant with the longest waiting time (as per section 9 of the general policy)