

APPENDIX 1
Homelessness Short Sharp Review
Housing Allocations Policy

The Homelessness Short Sharp Review considered Redditch Borough Council's draft Housing Allocations Policy during their latest meeting, held on the morning of Tuesday 4th July 2017. The Council's Head of Housing and Housing Options Manager provided a detailed explanation about the changes that had been proposed to the policy, both in writing and verbally, during the meeting. The group welcomed the new draft of the policy and concluded unanimously that it should be approved for the following reasons:

- The new draft policy is updated so as to reflect the Council's approach to delivering services in line with the local authority's strategic purposes.
- The proposed changes have been identified following a trial of these new working practices within the Locality Teams and Housing Options. The approach has therefore been tested and demonstrated to work well, particularly in relation to building community cohesion within Locality areas.
- The new draft of the policy clarifies the housing bands within the Choice Based Lettings system. This should help to address some confusion that could occur in the past under the old policy, particularly amongst residents who were uncertain about the differences between the different bands.
- Under these changes applicants in the Gold Band will also only receive one offer of suitable accommodation, whereas in the past they could receive up to two offers which could elongate the process and make it more difficult to plan housing placements for everyone on the waiting list.
- Clarification is also provided in respect of the points system which informs Choice Based Lettings, to the benefit of the public and interested residents.
- The draft document incorporates 'Direct Matching' into Council policy. This involves officers meeting with the individual to identify their housing needs and placing them in appropriate housing within the community. The increasing involvement of the Locality teams within local communities ensures that they are familiar with local residents in particular locations and can help to assess whether new residents could suitably be placed in accommodation within those areas. Officers have analysed the data which shows that housing allocations involving direct marketing result in a much lower rate of residents refusing the property they have been offered, with an 80 per cent reduction in refusals having been recorded since this approach was introduced.
- The draft policy has been the subject of public consultation, from 23rd June to 19th July 2017. Members were advised that a number of residents have submitted comments for the consideration of the Council during this time and much of this feedback has been positive about the proposed changes. Members have been assured that the feedback provided during this consultation period will be taken into account by officers.

For these reasons the group

RECOMMENDED that

the draft Redditch Borough Council Housing Allocations Policy should be adopted by the Council.