



Join the Conversation



Housing Allocations Policy

APPENDIX TO SUPPORT THE CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

Appendices A – B for the consultation summary report. The report and appendices are available to view on our [consultation website](#).

APRIL 2025

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY

A copy of the Housing Allocations paper comment from.



Housing Allocations Policy Review

Please return this comment form by 11.59pm on Tuesday 18 March 2025 to Freepost SOUTH AND VALE CONSULTATIONS (no other address information or stamp is needed).

Please view this comment form alongside the proposed Housing Allocations Policy.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are seeking your views on proposed changes to our joint Housing Allocations Policy.

We maintain a housing register and advertise available social housing through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme. The Joint Housing Allocations Policy sets out the criteria to join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated.

The policy needs updating to reflect current housing priorities in the districts. We are proposing amends and rationale for these changes including:

- Increase the income and savings threshold from £60,000 to £80,000.
- Increase the level of rent arrears allowed from £500 to £1,000.
- Amend the list of exclusions that relate to unacceptable behaviour.
- Increase the priority banding for homeless households in temporary accommodation from 'significant need for housing' to 'urgent need for housing'.

We are asking for your views on the four main proposed changes to the policy from **Tuesday 18 February until 11:59pm on Tuesday 18 March 2025**.

What happens next?

Once the consultation has closed, we will review and consider all the comments raised. A consultation summary report of the results will be produced and published on our website. This report will be shared with both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council Cabinets. If both Cabinets decide to adopt the policy, we expect the policy to be implemented in Autumn 2025.

Personal details

If you are responding as an **individual/member of the public**, you are not required to provide your name or contact details. Any personal information you provide to the councils within your comments that could identify you, will not be published in the summary report.

If you are responding in your capacity as a **council, councillor or council officer or business/organisation** we ask you to provide the name of your council or business/organisation- the summary report will include this information.

The consultation includes equality questions at the end. All questions are optional. All information is confidential and will only be used to help us monitor whether views differ across the community. Further information on data protection is available in our privacy statement.

About you

Q1. Are you responding as:

- ☐ An individual/member of the public on the housing register
- ☐ An interested individual/member of the public
- ☐ A business/organisation
- ☐ A district, county or town/parish officer
- ☐ A district, county or town/parish council
- ☐ A district, county or town/parish councillor
- ☐ Other (please specify below):

.....

Q2. If you are responding on behalf of a business, organisation or council, please provide its name below.

Q3. So we can understand if we've reached everyone we need to, please tell us the first part of your postcode in the box below, e.g. OX11 7

Income and savings threshold

Currently, applicants with combined savings and gross annual income of above £60,000 are disqualified from joining the housing register. The income and savings threshold to qualify for inclusion has not increased since the current policy was introduced in February 2019. The threshold does not reflect changes to income and inflation over the last five years.

The councils are proposing to increase the income and savings threshold for exclusion from the housing register from £60,000 to £80,000 to reflect the changes in income and inflation

since February 2019. This is consistent with the threshold set by Homes England for other forms of low-cost home ownership.

The policy wording for this section is provided below.

Applicants who have a sole or joint annual household income of over £80,000 gross will be excluded from the housing register. Applicants who have an annual household income lower than this but who have savings or other realisable assets which combined with their annual income would mean they had £80,000 gross available to them in that year will also be excluded from the housing register. This includes people with investments and those who have a legal or financial interest in a property that could be sold to resolve their situation.

The financial assessments will include all income, inclusive of pensions and all benefits received.

The income of all adult household members included on the housing application will be included in the calculation. The income of household members not part of the housing application will not be included.

Applicants who deliberately deprive themselves of resources, in particular savings, will be excluded from the housing register.

Applicants who are assessed as requiring extra care housing and who are considered to have sufficient financial resources will be eligible to join the housing register but will only be eligible for vacancies in Extra Care schemes. In most cases this will be a shared ownership unit in an Extra Care scheme but in exceptional circumstances, they may be considered for a rental unit at an extra care scheme (see section 15 vii).

Whilst many applicants will meet the eligibility and qualification criteria for being included on the housing register, some of our Registered Provider partners apply their own eligibility and qualification criteria in respect of the properties that they own. In particular, an applicant's level of savings and/or investments will be assessed according to their individual policy.

Q4. How far do you agree or disagree with this proposed change to income and savings threshold section of the policy?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Not applicable

Q5. If you have any other comments, please provide them below.

Rent arrears threshold

Currently, applicants are disqualified from joining the housing register if they have rent arrears over £500 and are responsible for the arrears.

The level of rent arrears to be excluded from the housing register has not increased since the current policy was introduced in February 2019 and therefore does not reflect the rising cost-of-living, higher rents, and inflation in the last six years.

The councils are proposing to:

- Increase the rent arrears threshold for disqualification from the housing register from £500 to £1000.
- Following agreement of a rent arrears repayment plan with the landlord, the repayments requirement is amended from six months to one month to join the housing register.

Payments under the repayment plan will need be maintained, or the arrears cleared, for an applicant to be nominated to a property. Allowing applicants who are willing to address low-level rent arrears to join the housing register will help support low-income households.

This proposal will enable residents to join the housing register and allow them to demonstrate their willingness to maintain a repayment plan and enable them to potentially move to more affordable accommodation. The increased threshold for rent arrears also reflects that Universal Credit housing costs are paid four weeks in arrears.

The policy wording for this section is provided below.

Rent arrears and housing debt mean any money owed to the councils; or another local authority; or the council's White Horse Lettings team - in respect of loans or repayments outstanding for rent-in-advance or a rent deposit; or money owed to Registered Providers; or a private landlord in the form of non-payment of rent; or former tenant arrears; or service charges; or chargeable repairs (including any deductions from deposits paid for by the council's White Horse Lettings Team). Council tax is not considered a housing debt for the purposes of this policy.

Current tenants, with rent arrears or housing debts relating to where they currently live, and former tenants with rent arrears or housing debts relating to previous tenancies, who meet one or more of the following criteria will not normally qualify for inclusion on the housing register and will be excluded where they are:

A current tenant of the council, another local authority, a Registered Provider or a private landlord, where a court possession order has been issued regarding rent arrears, the tenant is in breach of the Court Order and/or ongoing action is being taken to evict the tenant; or current arrears and/or housing debts are above £1,000.

A former tenant of the council, another local authority, Registered Provider or private landlord who has been evicted from, or given up their former property, owing rent arrears and have unpaid rent arrears or housing debts over £1,000 which are legally recoverable.

Housing Debt over £1,000 owed in respect of temporary accommodation provided to a homeless household.

Applicants may be considered for joining the housing register where there is evidence that they were not responsible for the debts accruing in the first place, or a financial assessment has concluded that they genuinely could not afford to meet the rent.

Applicants with housing debt above £1,000 may be considered for inclusion on the housing register if they have an agreed repayment plan with their landlord and have made at least one

payment. Confirmation that the agreement has been maintained will be required if an applicant makes a successful bid and if they have failed to do so, they may be skipped on a shortlist.

If an applicant with rent arrears has been allowed to join or remain on the housing register they will not normally be considered for an offer of accommodation until the arrears have been satisfactorily addressed. (see section 16, vi).

Applicants who meet the eligibility and qualification criteria for being included on the housing register and nominated to a property may also need to meet the qualification criteria of the Registered Provider in relation to housing debt.

Q6. How far do you agree or disagree with this proposed change to the rent arrears threshold section of the policy?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Not applicable

Q7. If you have any other comments, please provide them below.

Unacceptable behaviour

Currently, the policy includes an exclusion period for applicants previously guilty of unacceptable behaviours, such as historic offences, or offences that would not lead to them being evicted from a social tenancy. e.g. speeding offences. Additionally, applicants in certain groups are disproportionately excluded due to their life circumstances. e.g. rough sleepers or persons with addiction issues.

The councils are proposing to:

- Amend the unacceptable behaviour exclusion criteria to applicants guilty of indictable offences and/or anti-social behaviour that would lead to eviction from a social tenancy.
- Remove the disqualification period from joining the housing register at the end of a custodial sentence or eviction from up to two years and replace it with a requirement that independent evidence is provided that the applicant is willing to receive support and change their behaviour.

An applicant will not be nominated to a property without renewed independent evidence of changed behaviour. The applicant will also be assessed for their suitability to a particular property or area.

The amendment strikes the balance between excluding applicants who are unwilling to change and remain a risk to tenancy sustainment, against offering the opportunity of a stable housing environment to often vulnerable households that have already served their sentence or lost their tenancy.

The policy wording for this section is provided below.

Duration of exclusion or ineligibility for unacceptable behaviour

Applicants previously evicted for anti-social behaviour will only be eligible to join the housing register with independent evidence of their willingness to engage with support agencies to address their behaviour.

An applicant will not be nominated to a property without independent evidence of changed behaviour. The applicant will also be assessed for their suitability to a particular property or area.

Applicants who meet the eligibility and qualification criteria for being included on the housing register and to be nominated to the property may also need to meet the criteria of the Registered Provider in respect of criminal convictions and anti-social behaviour.

Q8. How far do you agree or disagree with this proposed change to the unacceptable behaviour section of the policy?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Not applicable

Q9. If you have any other comments, please provide them below.

Banding for homeless households

Currently, homeless households in temporary accommodation waiting for suitable alternative accommodation, receive Band 3 priority on the housing register.

What is the priority banding scheme?

To become a priority on the councils housing registers is determined by a banding scheme. Once residents are eligible and qualify to join the housing register, applicants will be placed into one of four bands:

Band 1 - Exceptional Need for Housing

Band 2 - Urgent Need for Housing

Band 3 - Significant Need for Housing

Band 4 - No Housing Need / Adequately Housed

Homeless households in temporary accommodation are often vulnerable and the accommodation may be at a distance from support networks, schools, GP surgeries or employment. Temporary accommodation does not provide a stable environment for households to rebuild their lives. Providing temporary accommodation is a significant cost to the councils.

The councils are proposing to increase the priority banding for homeless households in temporary accommodation waiting for suitable alternative accommodation from Band 3 (significant need for housing) to Band 2 (urgent need for housing) to help homeless households move more quickly into more suitable long-term accommodation.

The policy wording for this section is provided below.

Homeless households – offers to homeless applicants to whom the council has accepted a duty and placed in temporary accommodation

The councils will take all reasonable steps to prevent homelessness.

Households to whom the council have either provided temporary accommodation pending a main duty decision, or have accepted a main duty decision, will have their housing needs assessed in accordance with the HAP and placed in band 2. They will be eligible to submit bids under the CBL scheme.

The councils recognise that it is not desirable for households, particularly the vulnerable and families, to spend long periods of time in temporary accommodation. Households to whom the councils have accepted a homeless duty should be offered secure accommodation as quickly as possible, which also ensures that temporary accommodation is available for other homeless families.

Temporary accommodation is accommodation made available to households to whom the councils have a duty under homeless legislation. It includes council-owned accommodation; designated Registered Provider properties and hotels in an emergency or when no other suitable temporary accommodation is available. This accommodation is let in accordance with the homeless legislation and so does not fall within the scope of the housing allocations policy.

Applicants who have been accepted as owed the main housing duty or who are provided temporary accommodation under the homeless relief duty, will be given a time-limited priority to bid for properties through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. During this time they could

also be made a suitable Private Rented Sector Offer. Where applicants have been accepted as owed the main housing duty or who are accommodated in temporary accommodation pending a main duty decision, Officers will review their application on a weekly basis and place bids for suitable accommodation on their behalf.

Applicants who have been accepted as owed the main housing duty or who are accommodated in temporary accommodation under the homeless relief duty will normally be made one suitable offer of accommodation – this could be an allocation of affordable housing through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme following a successful bid or an offer of suitable accommodation within the private rented sector by the Council's White Horse Lettings Scheme – known as a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO).

Q10. How far do you agree or disagree with this proposed change to the banding for homeless households section of the policy?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Not applicable

Q11. If you have any other comments, please provide them below.

Anything else?

Q12. If you have any other comments on the Housing Allocations Policy, please provide them below.

The full proposed Housing Allocation Policy is available to view at the council's office, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE.

Our commitment to equal access for all

We are committed to making sure that residents have equal access to all council services. Please help us to keep track of how successfully we are achieving this by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

All questions are optional. All information is confidential and will only be used to help us monitor whether views differ across the community.

Q13. What is your sex?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q14. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ No (please specify below)

Q15. How old are you?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Under 16 | ☐ 35-44 | ☐ 65-74 |
| ☐ 16-24 | ☐ 45-54 | ☐ 75+ |
| ☐ 25-34 | ☐ 55-64 | ☐ Prefer not to say |

Q16. What is your ethnic group?

White

- ☐ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ Roma
- ☐ Any other white background (you can specify below)

Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background (you can specify below)

Black or Black British

- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African
- ☐ Any other black, black British, Caribbean or African background (you can specify below)

Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other mixed or multiple background (you can specify below)

Other Ethnic Group

- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Any other ethnic group (please specify below):

Q17. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illness lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (skip to the end of the survey)
- ☐ Prefer not to say (skip to the end of the survey)

Q18. Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- ☐ Yes, a lot
- ☐ Yes, a little
- ☐ Not at all

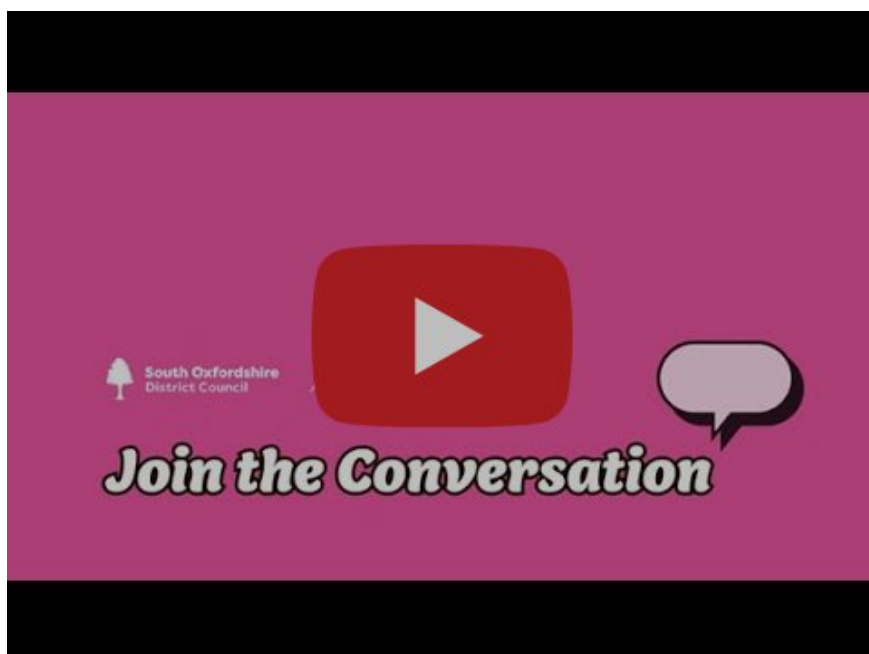
Thank you for your comments.

APPENDIX B – ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

Email Notification

A copy of the email notification is provided below.





Click here to take part in the consultation!

The councils each maintain a housing register and advertise available social housing through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme. The Joint Housing Allocations Policy sets out the criteria to join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated.

The policy was last reviewed in 2019 and needs updating to reflect current housing priorities in the districts.

We are asking for your views on the four main proposed changes and the updated policy from **Tuesday 18 February until 11:59pm on Tuesday 18 March 2025**.

Please note, this is a unique survey link just for you and is connected to your email address. If you would like to forward this email to anybody else, please refer them to the [public link to the survey](#).



Listening Learning Leading



If you are unable to complete the Housing Policy consultation online, have any queries about the survey or require it in an alternative format (for example: large print, Braille, audio, Easy Read or alternative languages) please call the Housing Lettings Team on 07801203557.

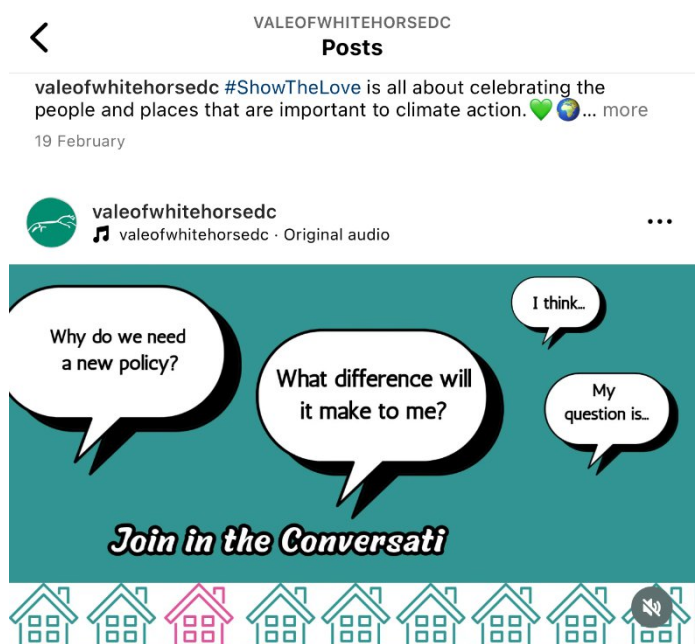
Data protection: Please refer to our privacy policy regarding how your personal data is used for this consultation,

available on our websites: [South Oxfordshire](#) and [Vale of White Horse](#). If you would like to know more about the council's data protection registration or to find out about your personal data, please visit: [Vale of White Horse data protection webpage](#) or [South Oxfordshire data protection webpage](#).

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

Social Media Posts

Copies of the council's social media posts are provided below.





South Oxfordshire District Council

18 Feb · 6

Have your say on proposed changes to how we provide homes to those in most need – including speeding up help for homeless households to move into long-term accommodation.

We work hard to provide homes for those who need them most. To help us get that right we have a clear set of guidelines, setting out who can join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is offered.

We're proposing four main changes to the guidelines set out in our Joint Housing Allocation Policy:

- Increase the income and savings threshold from £60,000 to £80,000
- Increase the level of rent arrears allowed from £500 to £1,000
- Amend the list of exclusions that relate to unacceptable behaviour
- Increase the priority banding for homeless households in temporary accommodation from 'significant need for housing' to 'urgent need for housing'

All the changes are designed to help ensure no one is disadvantaged when it comes to allocating social housing.

You can find out more details and take part on our website theconversation.southoxfordshire.gov.uk – see link in comments. The consultation runs until 11:59pm on Tuesday 18 March 2025.



Website Press release

A copy of the press release shared on the council's website is provided below.

Have your say on how we provide homes to those in most need

Proposed changes to the way social housing in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse is allocated for those in the most need will speed up help for homeless households to move into long-term accommodation.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are inviting people to take part in a public consultation on proposed changes to their Joint Housing Allocations Policy.

The councils maintain a housing register and advertise available social housing through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme. The Joint Housing Allocations Policy sets out the criteria to join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated.

The policy was last updated in 2019 – so it is now in need of a refresh to reflect current housing priorities in the districts.

Proposed changes to the policy cover four main areas, firstly, increasing the income and savings threshold from £60,000 to £80,000 to reflect the changes in income and inflation.

An increase in the rent arrears threshold from £500 to £1,000 is also proposed to help support low-income households by allowing applicants who are willing to address low-level rent arrears to join the register.

Ensuring people with life circumstances such as rough sleeping or addiction issues are not disproportionately excluded from the housing register is an area of focus for the proposed amends.

Removing the disqualification period of up to two years to join the housing register at the end of a custodial sentence or eviction, for example, is part of the proposals. The amend would require independent evidence to be provided that the applicant is willing to receive support and change their behaviour.

The fourth and final area of changes covers amending the priority 'banding' system for homeless households in temporary accommodation – this will help homeless households move more quickly into more suitable long-term accommodation.

Cllr Maggie-Filipova-Rivers, Cabinet Member for Housing at South Oxfordshire District Council said: "This policy underpins our work on providing homes to those who need them most. "It's timely now to refresh the policy alongside all our work to increase social housing provision across the district. We want to ensure the criteria for joining our housing register reflects economic changes and government policy updates over the past few years. Do join the conversation and share feedback on our proposed updates."

Cllr Sue Caul, Cabinet Member for Housing at Vale of White Horse District Council said: "We want to encourage people to take part in this consultation. Whilst some of the proposed changes to the criteria for joining our housing register are fairly small adjustments – they are all designed to help ensure no one is disadvantaged when it comes to allocating social housing. "We'll review and consider everyone's comments on the proposed policy updates so please do join in the consultation."

The consultation opens on Tuesday 18 February and runs until 11:59pm on Tuesday 18 March 2025.

To take part in the consultation go to our website theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk

Article from Oxford Mail

A screenshot of an article shared by Oxford Mail is provided below. You can view the [full article on their website](#).

Oxford Mail

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Oxfordshire councils plan changes to social housing allocation

23rd February

LOCAL GOVERNMENTPROPERTY

An aerial photograph of a dense residential area, likely in Oxfordshire, showing numerous houses with red-tiled roofs and brick walls. The houses are arranged in rows, and there are some trees visible in the background. A white camera icon with the number '2' is overlaid on the center of the image.