

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resource Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 August 2022
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Housing Allocation Policy – Medical Assessment
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ seek approval to increase the Housing Services establishment by 1 FTE Strategy and Policy Officer, to support the revised medical assessment approach.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that 1.0 FTE Strategy and Policy Officer is added to Housing Services establishment, as detailed in section 5.

3. Background

3.1. The revised Housing Allocation Policy was approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 20 March 2019 and introduced in May 2019. The policy is subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that its aims are being met. The policy includes provision for applicants' medical circumstances to be assessed and considered within the assessment of their housing need. The medical assessment service is currently carried out by an independent medical adviser and provides an assessment of an applicant's medical needs in relation to an application for housing (including appeals) and homelessness applications.

3.2. The service has been delivered through the current service provider for over 20 years and is due to end in March 2023. The provider has confirmed it will not be in a position to continue to provide the service after this point. Whilst the contract has been routinely subject to open procurement it has over the period, however, attracted little or no interest from alternative providers.

3.3 In this context, on 8 December 2021 Housing and Technical Resources Committee approved a minor change to the Allocation Policy to support any required change in approach. A revised approach has now been identified (see section 4 below) which requires the addition of a Strategy and Policy Officer to the Housing Services establishment. This Officer will work with colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to carry out the medical assessment function.

4. Proposed Approach to Medical Assessment

4.1. An appraisal of alternative approaches to the medical assessment function has been completed by staff from Housing and Technical Resources and the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP).

- 4.2. The exercise appraised that a joint approach by Housing and Health staff was the preferred medical assessment service model. Furthermore, it was considered that the Health Professional role would be best carried out by an Occupational Therapist. This profession has the appropriate training and skills to assess whether an applicant's current home could be adapted or equipment provided, to make it suitable to their physical needs and are also trained in assessing mental health and developmental needs.
- 4.3. Work to develop the new approach is currently being progressed and it has been confirmed that the Housing input to the service cannot be delivered from within existing resources. It is therefore proposed to recruit an additional Strategy and Policy Officer who will have specific responsibility for medical assessments and supporting wider joint working with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. The following post should be added to the establishment:

Post	Grade/SCP	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Gross Cost (inc on costs 31.5%)
Strategy and Policy Officer (Medical Assessment)	Grade 3 Level 2 - 4 SCP 63 - 74	£18.44 – £21.46	£33,651 – £39,162	£44,268 – £51,518

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. A plan has been developed detailing the key actions required to ensure the implementation of the new medical assessment service model by the end of March 2023. This will include arrangements for the recruitment and management of the Housing and Health professionals, as appropriate.
- 6.2. It is proposed that the current service will continue to operate alongside the new service for the first 3 months to enable a seamless transition and ensure the new model is delivering on anticipated outcomes.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The costs of establishing the new post will, in part, be off-set against the annual cost of the existing service which amounted to £16,866 in 2021/2022. The remaining amount, £34,652, will be met from within existing Housing Revenue Account budget.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy which impacts on the natural environment, climate change or sustainability.
- 8.2. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no strategic environmental assessment is required.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. There are no additional risks associated with this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

Annette Finnan
Head of Housing Services
(Housing and Technical Resources)

15 July 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Report to Housing And Technical Resources Committee 8 December 2021 - Housing Allocation Policy – Local Letting Plans 2022/2023
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council Allocation Policy

Contact for Further Information

If you would like further information, please contact:-

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