

## **LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL**

### **DIRECT MATCHING OF AVAILABLE AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING TO HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

#### **1. Policy Background.**

The changes to the Property Pool Plus (PPP) housing allocations policy widen the discretion to address wider housing issues faced by the participating local authorities by directly matching available affordable and social housing to particular groups of people in housing need.

Liverpool City Council is proposing to utilise this provision in the policy to directly match available properties to homeless applicants currently residing in temporary accommodation who are owed a duty by the Council under sections 188, 189B and 193 of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

#### **2. Homelessness in Liverpool.**

The current PPP allocations policy is focused on tackling housing need and there has been a particular emphasis on applicants with a homelessness priority need. Changes made to the policy which were implemented in January 2024 have supported this with additional priority awarded to homeless applicants and the removal of restrictions on properties that homeless households can be considered for. These changes have increased the total number of properties allocated to applicants with a homelessness priority.

Despite the positive impact of the policy direction outlined above, homelessness in Liverpool continues to be at critical levels. The economic situation together with various policy developments have resulted in significant increases in homeless households seeking assistance from the Council. Currently there are over 1,600 homeless households who have been placed in temporary accommodation. The accommodation provided is often unsuitable for long term occupation and has a negative impact on the life chances of vulnerable adults and families with children.

#### **3. Outline of Direct Matching proposal.**

It is proposed that, for a period of 12 months, 50% of all vacancies will be made available for direct matching to homeless households in temporary accommodation commencing in August 2025. The remaining vacancies will be allocated through the choice-based lettings scheme in accordance with the published allocations policy. In 2024/5 a total of 1,383 properties were allocated through PPP. If a similar number of properties were let during the period of the direct matching initiative, 692 properties would be made available to homeless households in temporary accommodation.

#### **4. Matching Process**

An analysis will be made of all households currently in temporary accommodation to ascertain their requirements in terms of property type and location. This will largely

determine which properties are to be directly matched and which ones are advertised on Property Pool Plus via the choice-based lettings scheme.

Households in temporary accommodation will be asked to register PPP applications if they have not already done so. The usual checks regarding their eligibility and whether they meet the qualification criteria will be undertaken. This will enable them to bid for suitable properties advertised on PPP while they are waiting for a direct match. Applicants will be prioritised for matches taking into account factors such as the length of time they have been in temporary accommodation and whether they have other housing needs which would give them an additional preference such as acute health and welfare needs.

The Housing Solutions Service will have oversight of the matching process and caseworkers will assist clients through the process. Verification checks will be undertaken for all cases and team leaders will sign off matches to available properties. Housing providers will also undertake the usual pre-tenancy checks before the tenancy is commenced. In accordance with the current allocations policy, homeless applicants will have no entitlement to a refusal of a suitable offer of accommodation.

Where it is clear that there are no applicants to be matched to particular properties, the housing provider will be directed to advertise them through the choice-based lettings scheme. Careful monitoring of matches will be undertaken to keep void periods to a minimum.

In the interests of sustainability and community cohesion, it is intended to make the distribution of matched properties as wide as possible. This will be monitored closely as the initiative proceeds.

Applicants who are matched to properties and have support needs will be provided with housing support to assist with viewing of properties, tenancy sign up, benefit claims and ongoing tenancy management as appropriate. Referrals will be made to relevant health and care agencies as required.

## **5. Performance monitoring and review**

Quarterly reports will be provided to PPP Contract Board to appraise them of progress. This information will be shared with the Cabinet Member for Housing. Data collected will include:

- Number of direct matches made by property type;
- Number of allocations through CBL scheme by priority;
- Geographical distribution of directly matched properties;
- Numbers of homeless applicants in temporary accommodation.