

## **Item: 15**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 12 September 2018.**

**Choice Based Lettings.**

**Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To present the outcome of consultation on choice based lettings, together with options.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

That, in March 2018, when considering amendments to the Rent Setting Policy, the Council agreed that the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should arrange for consultation to be undertaken in respect of Choice Based Lettings.

#### **2.2.**

That the consultation in respect of Choice Based Lettings was undertaken during June and July 2018, when a total of 1,449 surveys were issued.

#### **2.3.**

The results of the consultation, as outlined in section 5 of this report.

**It is recommended:**

#### **2.4.**

That choice based lettings be progressed with a view to implementation during financial year 2019 to 2020.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1.**

At its meeting held on 7 February 2018, when considering a review of the Rent Setting Policy, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted that consultation undertaken on that policy had raised issues, including the lack of choice based lettings.

### **3.2.**

The Committee subsequently recommended that the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should arrange for consultation to be undertaken in respect of Choice Based Lettings submit a report, to the next available meeting of the Committee, regarding proposed amendments to the Rent Setting Policy and including consideration of choice based letting.

## **4. Background**

### **4.1.**

The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which came into effect on 1 April 2012 and was reviewed in 2017, includes a series of outcomes and standards against which housing services are to be regulated. Outcome 3 focuses on tenant participation and states:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

This outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants, other customers and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations to become more capable of involvement – this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.”

### **4.2.**

In addition, Outcome 10 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, focuses on access to social housing and states:

“People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

This outcome covers what social landlords can do to make it easy for people to apply for the widest choice of social housing that is available and suitable and that meets their needs. It includes actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others, for example through Common Housing Registers or mutual exchange schemes, or through local information and advice schemes.”

## **5. Summary of Consultation Results**

### **5.1.**

The consultation was undertaken during June and July 2018. Individual letters, a leaflet entitled “Choice Based Lettings: What You Need to Know” and a survey form were sent to all existing Council tenants as well as all applicants on the Council’s waiting list. Information was available through the Council’s website.

## 5.2.

Surveys were sent to all tenants within Housing Revenue Account properties, a total of 868 surveys. A further 581 surveys were sent to waiting list applicants. Overall 1449 surveys were issued.

## 5.3.

A total of 188 responses were received being a 13% response rate.

## 5.4.

The full consultation results are attached at Appendix 1 including all additional comments made.

## 5.5.

The responses to individual questions are as follows:

### 5.5.1.

Would you support the Council moving to a Choice Based Lettings Scheme, based on the information provided in the accompanying leaflet:

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 63.3%  |
| <b>No</b>          | 34.57% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 2.13%  |

Various comments were made which were generally not in favour of the proposal. Some indicated confusion as to the extent of the changes which would purely be about advertising and choice as opposed to any changes in the assessed level of housing need.

### 5.5.2.

While a move to Choice Based Lettings would require additional investment in Information Technology systems which can be covered from within existing budgets. Views were sought as to whether a small rental increase, amounting to £4 per household per year, would be supported if adverts were to be placed in the local press.

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 48.4%  |
| <b>No</b>          | 49.47% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 2.13%  |

Again, a range of comments were made generally not in support of a rental increase. Some expressed concern about the level of rents currently.

### 5.5.3.

Views were sought as to where adverts should be placed ie on the Council's website which would be free and/or in the local press which would have a cost. Respondents could tick all that applied.

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| <b>Local Press</b>     | 49.47% |
| <b>Council Website</b> | 68.62% |
| <b>No Response</b>     | 15.43% |

Various comments were made particularly relating to whether people had access to the internet. Suggestions were made to include advertising in libraries but timescales for the allocation of housing are tight and regulated.

### 5.5.4.

Question 4 onwards applied only to applicants. Applicants were asked whether they felt that the current allocations system provided adequate choice on the type of property they would like or where they would like to live.

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 37.23% |
| <b>No</b>          | 32.98% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 29.79% |

Comments are attached at Appendix 1 and of mixed opinions.

### 5.5.5.

In addition, applicants were asked whether they felt they had adequate information about their housing application and their chances of being allocated a house.

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 51.6%  |
| <b>No</b>          | 22.87% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 25.53% |

Again comments are attached at Appendix 1 and represent a range of mixed opinions.

### 5.5.6.

Applicants were also asked whether they would feel confident in registering their interest/bidding for vacant properties.

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 53.19% |
| <b>No</b>          | 22.34% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 24.47% |

### 5.5.7.

Applicants were asked whether they would require assistance in bidding for properties.

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Yes</b>         | 18.62% |
| <b>No</b>          | 57.45% |
| <b>No Response</b> | 23.93% |

### 5.5.8.

In each situation additional space was provided to allow comments to be made. These are attached at Appendix 1.

## 5.6.

The statistical response to Question 1 is clearly in favour of implementation of choice based lettings. However, responses to Questions 2 and 4 relating to the need for a rental increase and the level of choice do not show an equally clear response. Overall the result is a picture not clearly in favour of either approach.

## 5.7.

On the basis of the statistical response alone choice based lettings should be progressed and therefore amendments would require to be made to the Council's lettings policy and processes with a view to implementing the system during financial year 2019 to 2020.

## 6. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

## 7. Links to Council Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority of Caring Communities.

## **8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan**

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Strong Communities.

## **9. Financial Implications**

The anticipated cost of implementation of choice based lettings would be a one-off payment of £10,000 for Information Technology enhancements which, due to a staff vacancy, can be funded from within the 2018 to 2019 budget. In addition, there would be advertising costs of £3,500 which would require to be met from a rental increase of £4 per household per annum.

## **10. Legal Aspects**

### **10.1.**

Section 20(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended, requires that, in selecting tenants for their houses, all local authorities and Registered Social Landlords must give reasonable preference:

#### **10.1.1.**

To persons who:

- Are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard.
- Are occupying overcrowded houses.
- Have large families.
- Are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.

#### **10.1.2.**

To homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness (within the meaning of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003).

### **10.2.**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 is currently being phased in and this ultimately will result in some amendment to the reasonable preference groups as outlined at section 10.1.1 above.

### **10.3.**

The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced many changes to the homelessness legislation including greater duties towards homeless households and therefore a greater number of households requiring permanent rehousing.

## **10.4.**

As with all consultations, the Council cannot reach a determinative view until the Council is satisfied that:

- Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
- Sufficient reasons must be given for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response.
- Adequate time must be given for such consideration and response.
- The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.

## **10.5.**

When taking the product of consultation conscientiously into account in finalising proposals, the decision report must include relevant representations made to the authority. It is essential that the Authority takes representations conscientiously into account and avoid any appearance of bias.

## **10.6.**

There is no legal requirement to undertake choice based lettings.

## **11. Contact Officers**

Wilf Weir, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2436, Email [wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk).

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, extension 2177, Email [frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk).

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Comments from consultation.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

# Appendix 1

| <p><b>Question 1</b><br/>From the information we have provided in the accompanying leaflet, would you support the Council moving to a Choice Based Lettings scheme?</p>  | <p><b>Question 2</b><br/>A move to Choice Based Lettings would require additional investment in IT systems which can be covered from within existing budgets. However if adv</p>   | <p><b>Question 3</b><br/>Where do you think adverts should be placed? Options would be local press which would have a cost and / or Council website which would be free (please</p> | <p><b>Question 4</b><br/>Do you feel the current allocations system gives you adequate choice on the type of property you would like or where you would like to live?</p> |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>I say no as I previously lived in an area that did this and there's always more going for the same properties and if it had been like this at OIC I think I would still be fighting for a house. This way those who need a home are offered one, and we took the first we were offered because we were desperate to have somewhere to live. Choice based lettings makes it harder for those who aren't able to get online to apply for housing week in, week out. OHAL have this system and there will always be someone who meets the criteria better than you. I know someone who's been waiting for 3 years using this system and it doesn't work. Why fix something that isn't broken? You ask for 4 areas in</p> | <p>I can barely afford the rent as it is. Increasing it makes it harder for those of us who aren't entitled to housing benefit but are struggling to make ends meet. It's meaning taking the budget away from places that actually need it to implement a stupid system that doesn't actually work!!</p> |   |   |



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| <p>which a person would be willing to live, we got our first choice. Within 2 months. The system works... don't change it.</p>  |   |  |  |
| <p>How much conceltation has really gone on to access the viability of the scheme, it seems great in principal, but cost passed on (as indeed they will be) to tenants may make it difficult to impliment.</p>      | <p>The difficulty is how much and how often would the increase in rent occur, how will effect those tenants who are happy where they are, is it fair on them?</p> | <p>In the current financial climate, one would encourage the cheapist option.</p>  | <p>I have never had to use the system so I am unable to give an effective answer, although, I am considering a move further into Stromness, as living up Grieveship West leaves me somewhat breathless when walking back home.</p> |
| <p>Q1) Based on past experience, Choice based lettings has been successful in the North of England for a number of years in Social housing. I have no experience of this being implemented on an Island though.</p> | <p>However, a library would also be a good source to put this information forward.</p>  | <p>Further information and how to applying based in the Library would be good.</p> |  |

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| <p>Halve of this form I can hardly see to fill in as my eye sight is worse now I only can see big print.</p>  |   | <p>Halve of this form I do not understand after all I am 73 in August and cannot be bothered filling in your forms.</p>   | <p>it would not matter to me you Council always make up your minds at the end of a day the Council make the decicions always.</p> |
|   | <p>I don't think existing tenants should be expected to pay any extra rent to facilitate future tenants - under the proposed new scheme. The existing system is perfectly fine. Why change what is already a good working system?</p>   |   |   |
| <p>It seems to work for OHAL tho it is a little depressing to see the nos who apply for vacant properties. On the plus side people are bidding for properties and areas in which they wish to live which is a postive and must essentially reduce costs to the RSL.</p> | <p>Using CBL systems wd hhopefully mean OIC wd have a more efficient turnover in letting void or soon to be void properties. If a new incoming tenant has been ID sooner rather later perhaps OIC wd be incentivised to turn houses round more quickly thus incr rent revenue than incr void costs thus more monies in the HRA which wd fund ongoing costs of CBL system. At present the system used currently is inefficient, wasteful and costly.</p> | <p>Not everyone has access/ or uses the internet. The housing part of OIC website is not that good, accessible or up to date. Wd that improve?? In this day and age cd consider facebook tho I wd not use it. OHAL site is easy to access and use. It is an housing organisation. OIC site is too cumbersome. Wd have to consider as to where to place CBL wd be sited.</p> |   |
|   |   |   | <p>(Already) in Sheltered Housing since July 2016.</p>  |

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| I applied for houses in Kirkwall where did I get a house Holm All I can say offer a house where a retired person wants one not miles from your family but I was desprite being in privet Rent I was please to accept. |   |  |                      |
| Feel that it may cause problems for vulnerable people who might be able to bid on properties quickly.   |   | N/A - not interested in this scheme for reasons given at question 1. |                      |
| It is not everyone's choice to live on any of the islands of the mainland.  | I don't see any point of advertising in any form as the applicant has to apply in any case. |  |                      |
| Our rent would increase yet again due to an increase in costse.g new IT system.   |   |  |                      |
|   |   | Not everyone has access to the internet.                             |                      |
| Choice based lettings system seems very unfair for locals looking for I.I.C rental properties who do not fall under homelessness, medical need etc.   |   |  |                      |
|   |   |  | See comments at end. |
| Don't want to know.   | Don't want to know.   | Don't want to know.  | Don't want to know.  |
|   |   | I have no computer I read no orcadian.                               |                      |

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| <p>I have never agreed with a Choice Based Letting scheme as I feel that people at the bottom of the list with no or very little points will ever get a chance at moving so may see a higher number of docotrs letters etc putting a strain on doctor waiting times.</p> | <p>We already have rent increases annually despite consultation on wether we agree to it or not, it still goes ahead, making a farce of the consultation process. Therefore any further rent increase to cover advertising costs, I consider an insult as I don't want Choice Based Lettings.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Changing to the Choice Based Lettings scheme seems more complicated than the letting policy is now.</p>   | <p>It's bad enough when the rent gets increased every year when the houses don't get maintained and the repairs take forever to get done.</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Would be a lot better.</p>  |   | <p>Facebook page would be good. OIC housing.</p> |  |
|  | <p>If this meant that we could be allocated a house quicker then yes I agree to this.</p>   |  | <p>Properties seem to come up very rarely (limited).</p> |

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| Based on past experience, choice based lettings is successful in housing associations in the UK. However I have not had experience of this being implemented on an island. | Adverts or information could be made available at the library.  | Library's are a good source of information.   | Yes and no - theres alway room for more flexibility.   |
|  |   | Council website and notice board in council offices reception/waiting area, like other areas of the OIC use eg. marriage notices. |  |
| May lead to longer waits.  | This would give allow the local council to use this exxcuse to increase rents by however much they wish. Tenants shouldn't have to pay for council advertising. | Some possible tenants don't have mobile internet systems.   | If its not what you need you are penalised.  |
| Leave as it is.  | Local athority housing rents are high enough, people who can afford more would probably be able to buy a house.   | The system works, why change it? As always it comes down to money.  |  |
| I think this is a good idea.   |   |   |  |
|  |   |   | Not used it so cant comment I was in emergency housing.  |
|  |   |   | My husband is disabled and has certain housing needs and when putting in out four housing areas we have no idea if the properties there are suitable or not, also, an anywhere rural option would be good. |
|  |   | Facebook page like OHAL. Library.   | If you are offered a house you have to take it.  |

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| <p>Never heard of this choice based lettings. Not sure what is ring-fenced in law is either. Not good on PC (point system suits me fine) When I get to 67 I might get a place in Orkney!!</p>   | <p>I will have to look at the orcadian is it online? I got a job here by pure luck and my house is still stable. Keep paying mortgage. and hols waited 12 years to get this house. Still want to retire to Orkney. Suspect that be a few years yet.</p>  | <p>2 heads are better than one. Aberdeen advertise in papers and PC online. I am very slow when it comes to work. I am not great with PC something small when i 67 will have the who waits.</p>   | <p>Not sure. If i have to wait 11 years that's what will do just 1 room bedroom coal fire that i will be able to do my own gardening (luv my garden) giving neighbours and friends fruit and veg.</p>  |
| <p>It would also be a good idea to contact applicants who live far away like myself to be contacted via email/letter/phone to let them know also that if/when a property comes up for rent, otherwise they will be left out and on the waiting list for a very long time.</p> | <p>As above because i myself cannot get the Orcadian paper so i have to rely on going on your website/write to you, or await correspondence from you from time to time, and i don't think this is fair to all applicants as people who live far away they are not getting a chance to bid, so yes i agree a slight increase of rent levels is a good idea.</p> | <p>This i cannot get hold of unless live in scottish isles. I would pay the Sanday Council if they could post me the Orcadian newspaper via the post to myself so this gives me a chance too, this also covers post/packaging/stampage.</p> | <p>As i feel like i am left out as live far away and people who live nearby are having the opportunity to bid rather than other applicants so they would be on the waiting list the longest for the applicants who live elsewhere/far away</p> |
| <p>I do not think this scheme would be an improvement on the existing one.</p>  |  | <p>Neither.</p>   |  |
|   |  | <p>No. Neither would work for the Northern Isles - we get the Orcadian a day later than those living on the mainland and sometimes even later in a bad winter and our broadband is often faulty as well.</p>                                |  |

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|--|--|---|---|
| Only if applicants who have applied multiple times without being offered a property are more likely to be offered one this way.  | I feel that the council should definitely pay for this as it is their scheme/lettings and the council is/should be responsible for paying for their own adverts!!!!  |   | However it is extremely difficult/impossible to get accommodation/housing unless you are living on the streets. This minimises problems such as domestic abuse, stressful/co-dependant living and overcrowded families.                                 |
| My feeling is less educated people would be left behind.   | for above reason.  |   |   |
|  |  | social media                                      |   |
|  | Not really. BUT possibly yes if rent increase was in pence not pounds.   | Also, council website IF I have a website!        |   |
| I think if you need a house you will take the first one offered to you like my family did. Its all wrong letting people pick and choose. If your in need you will take anything. | We have had a rent increase every year with no improvements or modernisation made to the property. So i would not be happy to pay for someone else to "pick" what property they wanted at a cost to everyone else. | i don't think they should! N/A.                   | Like i said in question one you should be happy to take whatever you are offered. As some one who was on the Council and OHAL list i don't i don't think it worked at all. We never even got a look in with OHAL and we had a teenager with no bedroom. |
| Not sure as not applicable to my aunts case.   |  | Council appear to be cash strapped enough.        |   |
|  |  |   | Very limited and selective.   |
| NO we pay enough rent without paying more. Another waste of money.   | NO certainly not.  | NO ADVERTS. As I have already said. I pay enough. |   |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>This is a good idea.</p>   | <p>£4 a year is a small price to pay for such a good service.</p>   | <p>Local press adverts are important as not everybody has access to computers.</p>  |  |
| <p>The council has over £500 million in reserve. Therefore there should be no cost for any tenants. When I claimed for compensation, you stated that this would come from tenants who were the poorest in society. So what's different now?</p> | <p>(Without cost) The cost has more than enough money to cover this from reserves if you as a department deem it to be a good idea.</p>   | <p>No cost to potential tenants. They do not need to buy an Orcadian but could use a library to gain access.</p>                      |  |
|   |   |   | <p>I am unsure, not really familiar with current system.</p> |
|   |   | <p>The Orcadian circulation seems to be getting smaller - if someone wants a house they can be found 24/7 at the council website.</p> |  |
| <p>Choiced based lettings scheme would make absolutely no difference. Properties are limited, applicants are often in urgent need of accommodation, where exactly does there exist a choice in these situations?</p>                            | <p>How can an already existing 3% increase in rent be justified against a 1% increase in the majority of household wages. How can an investment into IT systems be covered by existing budgets but adverts can't? Why does the cost of adverts require additional rent payments? This does not appear to make any sense what so ever.</p> |   |  |
| <p>The garden at N1 Faracett is a disgrace to look at grass that is starting to my garden it time to do something about thank you.</p>  |   |   |  |



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|  | You could put it on your council website or through a Facebook page. These don't cost anything.   |  |   |
|  | Why do residents have to pay more money for something that should be included in the job that council workers are paid for anyway? When residents are asked to fill in a survey asking for their thoughts about an increase in rent, the rent gets increased anyway. I'm in a 3 bed even though its been proved by a council employee that its a 2 bed and a box room and yet i'm paying rent on a 3 bed. No reimbursment, just another increase in rent instead. It's a joke!! |  |   |
|  |   | Council website with a dedicated tab so its easier to find.                | Not enough properties in certain areas. |
|  | I cant fill this in, don't know how to answer the question.   |  |   |
|  |   | Same as OHAL - simple and easy to look to see if there are any properties. |   |

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| <p>I can't understand why it should only be council tenants this is being put on what about all the people who got there houses for next nothing and now getting big grants to do them up. I am willing to pay my rent for the upkeep of mu house but not this. This will be another waste as the increase will go ahead.</p> | <p>Its time the council got a grip and stop waste. For one thing stop the useless magazine. I for one have no interest what so ever who is having kids or who is learning that would save a few hundreds I am sure. The same goes for that survey that was put out short ago. As if repairs are done we already get letters to fill in. Money could also be saved on the times the green bins are picked up. As far as I can see people are putting them out not when they full. Though if folk dont like it someone should go around with the bin men to see.</p> |   |   |
|   | <p>Yes I would pay a small amount. But I would like to know the full cost before I would pay the extra rent.</p>   | <p>As many people have internet on they mobile and at home. If you had a display board in the housing deparat you could display houses on it.</p> | <p>As I am trying to move to Orkney I don't have the points. This would give me and other like me a better chance of housing. As we would only take a house in the areas we want. Not anywhere. So we would take up the property and less likely to turn it down.</p> |
|   |  | <p>It can be quite tricky to actually find the housing listing each week.</p>   | <p>Sometimes I cant ind the correct website and there are no photos inside the property so tenants are taking a chance on agreeing on the property.</p>   |

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| I believe people of similar age groups should be housed together. I currently reside in an area which used to be for elderly only, but now with young people are joining the scheme and they have caused disruption, noise and litter and they're visitors coming and going at all hours and loitering. |   |   |                             |
| Any improvement to get people houses is a blessing.   | Advertising is good. More people hear better.   |   | Im mixed between yes or no. |
| It would I think submit a free for all policy and forfeit people who have waited a long period.   |   |   |                             |
| Gives everyone better choice of their own individual needs.   | If you do advertising online it wouldn't cost money so therefore no need to put rent increases. |   |                             |
|   | Small rent rise is tolerable provided it's minimal and spread over time.                        |   |                             |
|   |   | As we do not live in Orkney, we only get to see the houses on the internet. |                             |

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|   |  | A property board outside the council offices and community buildings on the outer islands. Similar to commercial sellers eg estate agents and law firms. Putting adverts in The Orcadian could lead to people applying on a whim from outside the county just because they would like a change of scenery. |   |
|   |  | People looking for houses are not usually used to on-line transaction.   |   |
| I am very much in favour of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. It would be a much fairer system. | Although I have ticked the "yes box" I would have thought there would be a reduction on administration costs on offering applicants and tenants vacant properties, and this might cover advertising costs. | As most people use the internet now, there will probably be a small element who don't. Therefore adverts in the Orcadian may be necessary initially and at a later date inform applicants to access, and check, websites. There are computers in the Libraries that could be used.                         |   |
|   |  | Not online. I know a lot of older people who are not.  | I feel I was given no choice at all council policy. I was told, was not keen on 70 year olds getting a change of house. Seven years later and I see that was correct! |
|   | Rent is expensive enough as it is. Any higher we would not be able to afford food.   | N/A  | N/A   |

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|   |  |   | The current system means that you may be offered a house in an area you don't want to live in but if you refuse the house, you drop back down the list and have to wait again.  |
| I think the system is absolutely fine & fair as it is.  |  |   |   |
| Friends of mine down south experienced this and found it difficult and full of problems.  |  |   |   |
| If it is going to help myself and other applicants over the property and area that myself and other applicants thee yes I would agree to influence the development of the policy.   | Sadly due to myself having 5 illnesses at present I do not work at present, but if I had to pay any rent at all of my DWP Benefits then I would. | I personally think that all advertisements are very significant to enable myself and other applicants the correct flat/ house, area atc even at a cost. | Yes I do? As mentioned in Question 2, I have severe illnesses and I would love to be in an area where there is no crime, anti-social behaviour etc. Also as mentioned in previous letters to Orkney Council I do not drink alcohol or take any illegal drugs. |
|   |  | Facebook page.  |   |
| System ok as it is, why fix something that isn't broken? Waste of money to set up - money the council apparently doesn't have, I would much rather see public areas kept clean, tidy, i.e. street sweeping & lanes and grass cutting! | Really?! (has underlined "can be covered by existing budgets")   |   |   |

|  |            |  |  |
|--|------------|--|--|
| However, currently I'm trying to move to Orkney & applying for many properties with OHAL & unsuccessful everytime.   |            |  |  |
|  |            | Council Website presently is difficult to navigate where housing is concerned. |  |
|  |            | Do not have any of the two.  |  |
| I have been on the housing list for over 10 years and it was hard enough to get a house. When OHAL changed it is now impossible, due to me not being pregnant, and alcoholic or drug addict. | see above. | N/A.   |  |
|  |            | Letting system should not change.  |  |
|  |            | Not everyone has personal access to internet.                                  | You can only offer vacant properties available. Choice is, therefore, restricted by availability regardless of allocation method |
| OHAL do and it is completely unfair to those who are local. I have applied for nearly every property advertised + gotten no where. My medical needs were ignored and foreigners got houses   | As above.  |  | Never been considered.   |

|   |   |  |  |
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| instead. I know this factually from my last job.  |   |  |  |
| Remember it would be necessary to ensure that people without access to on-line facilities would not be disadvantaged in any way.  | The existing rent levels seem most reasonable when compared to the private sector - a small rise would seem to be eminently better.   |  | I don't know if the Council supports a similar policy but I was told by OHAL that I was unable to view a property before declaring an interest in it. Also - a person may be living on their own but would like another bedroom to be able to invite family/friends to stay. |
| I have mixed feelings. I am familiar with OHAL's scheme & have applied for properties under the system. It does indeed mean you apply for houses most likely suited to you. However, I'm inclined to think that constantly 'bidding' for properties and being unsuccessful may be more stressful than simply waiting for a housing offer. | The approximate cost for advertising in the local press would be fine. I'm not sure though if you meant the new system would mean a weekly rent increase to properties over and above this? Hopefully any increase to rents would be minimal. | I think both would be required. Not everyone is comfortable in using technology - or has access to it. | There's a good choice of location and which properties you're entitled to is clear.  |
| Anything else) Mr D Nock.   |   |  |  |
|   |   |  | Not sure about this one. I have so far been offered one property, which I declined, and therefore lost priority.   |

| <b>Question 5</b><br><b>Do you feel you have adequate information about your housing application and your chances of being allocated a house? (If no please provide details)</b>  | <b>Question 6</b><br><b>Would you feel confident in registering your interest/bidding for vacant properties?</b>  | <b>Question 7</b><br><b>Would you require assistance to register your interest/bid for properties?</b> | <b>Other Comments</b>  |
|---|---|--|--|
|   | <p>I would need to speak to a member of staff whom is able to guide me in how to register an intrest in applying for a vacant property in Stromness.</p>                          | <p>Due to psychological difficulties I struggle to fill in application forms.</p>                      |  |
|   |   |  | <p>The Councils have it cut and dry which you decide and stop sending form to me all I want is to live in peace in my own home of 42 yrs on 23-11-2018.</p>  |
| <p>Difficulty at present moment applicants can, by choice, be on both OIC and OHAL lists. However, both organisations use separate allocations systems. We were lucky OIC had a degree of flexibility and we were offered a property outwith our preferred area but its worked.</p> | <p>So long as there is a chance of which medium one can use. I.e not just internet based ie by OIC site, email etc. Shd also be by telephone perhaps as voicemail or by post.</p> |  | <p>If OIC adapt an CBL system wd potential applicant be able to 1 bid for an area outwith original application 2 if so I would assume applicant wd have to amend area of choice at time of bid. Wd this impact negatively on date of original application?</p> |
| <p>Not applicable see 4.</p>  |   |  |  |



|   |                     |                     |  |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--|
|   | No internet.        |                     |  |
|   |                     |                     | Keep up the good work. Improvements in letting would be an asset.  |
| Never hear anything from O.I.C. re my application.  |                     |                     |  |
|   |                     |                     | I feel the Council do a great job, any changes would only improve the good work already been done.   |
| Point system is confusing . Have no idea if I have any chance of getting place. Points renter had to get property should also be published. |                     |                     | Big problem is Huge lack of housing. No allocated housing system will matter if there are no homes. BUILD! BUILD! BUILD!   |
| Don't want to know.   | Don't want to know. | Don't want to know. | Don't want to know and don't send me any more.   |
|   |                     |                     | You looked at doing this short ago it was not popular, leave well alone as wanted! And I am quite sure no one would want extra expense.  |
| Didn't at the time.   |                     |                     | Thought this system was already in place.  |
|   |                     |                     | I feel you have already decided to do this anyway.   |
|   |                     |                     | I like OHALs method a lot more than the councils current method of offer a property, and take you off the register for a year if you don't like/the property is wrong for you. |

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|   | If I knew it was going to be fair.  |  | How will this impact upon staffing. Idea in principle great but is there the staffing resources available to implement this. Tenants need to have more say as there are some areas that wouldn't want to live and at the moment, it is hard to decline. The OHAL system is a lot better where we bid. Lettings need looked at. Why only allow a one bedroom house when you know they are going to need 2 bedroom in a year's time. Surely more cost efficient and easier for everyone to give a 2 bedroom at the outset |
|   |   |  | I have found in the past that all my dealings with the council have been very helpful. Thank you  |
|   |   |  | Possibly free up some of your emergency houses for those seeking council accommodation. Please consider couples who work varied unsocial hours may require to qualify for a 2 bedroomed property.   |
| The current points system needs more clarity and flexibility. | Subject to more clarity of the points system also flexibility.  | Because i would not wish my application to be a waste of time. | Due to mould and spores in cistern walls, which are covered by cladding i feel this is a health issue.  |
| More frequent updates.  | Again prospective tenants may keep being rejected due to others who are presumed more urgent which could lead to some |  | Pros and cons for both systems. Whichever is implemented needs to ensure as short a wait as possible, not an increase which may occur in the new system.  |

|   |   |   |   |
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|   | having longer waits than being on a list.   |   |   |
|   | I would feel confident, but I don't want to register and there are lots (i mean lots) know nothing about computers so the good old letter works just fine.  | I wouldn't but why should others! letters work just as well or phones!!! talking to people that works too.  | As far as any councils go id need a whole pack of A4 sheets.  |
|   | I would get someone else to do it like my mum or a support worker.  | See Q6.   |   |
| Preference is given to people already resident in Orkney. I feel this is very unfair on families wishing to come to Orkney.   |   |   | I have waited for a property on Orkney for years. I was first to express and interest for a house on Nth Ronaldsay. I have since changed my preference and applied for new builds on the mainland, but to no avail.   |
| This is the first time ive heard from use's for a while. I am not on PC a lot out gardening in this lovely weather. I don't get the orcadian tryed to order from paper shop. No joy!! | Still don't understand bidding? Is this a cost to me? How much? Don't like new builds too small. (no solar panels). And expensive too heat! I am coming up soon , so will have a look round and will pop into your office and say hello!! | Probably. Orkney is a cool palce to live, fresh air and close to the sea all round. Just what i need for my retirement. My sisters and brothers can come and visit and friends. | Since i got a job here (Chalmers) 2am to 11-12am i can pay off my mortgage hopefully. But would loce a wee but & ben up there give it some TLC and chill out. If i am lucky and do get a place (no problem like writing letters much better PC) will be happy!! I am a good driver and love helping people so if there is anything give me a shout. |

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|  |  |  | <p>OIC should approach the Chartered Inst. Of Housing to find out what advice and help is being offered regarding choice based lettings. Chartered Inst. Of Housing, 4th Floor, 125 Princes St, Edinburgh, EH2 4AD Tel 0130 225 4544. Regarding sheltered housing, OIC should contact Hanover, who are Scotland's specialists in this field - Hanover (Scotland) Housing Assn, 95 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS Tel 0131 557 0598. I know, for instance that some of OIC's criteria for sheltered housing would render applicants unsuitable for consideration to Hanover, who would recommend residential care!!</p> |
|  |  |  | <p>I would like to point out that I am quite happy where I live on Flotta "but" as I get older and should my health deteriorate I could be forced to move to the mainland. Yours sincerely<br/>G Graham @ 25.</p>   |
|  | <p>The reason being that I am not confident working my way round a computer and feel that I could not ask anyone for help.</p> |  |   |

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| <p>As same as question 4 it needs to be fair for all otherwise people who don't live in Sanday/Scottish Isles they are not getting a chance to bid on properties. Q6) Same answer for question 4 &amp; 5.</p> |  | <p>If can't get hold of the Orcadian then how is that applicant going to bid so yes that applicant would need assistance like the council to place a bid for that applicant.</p> |  |
| <p>Only informed of number of points awarded, no idea where this places me on the list or waiting times. This information is essential.</p>   |  |  |  |
|   |  |  | <p>Cannot understand why, when you have such budget costs, you want to introduce this now. Over the years we have had other proposals i.e. being able to say who should be able to move in next door to us - and NOTHING ever came of that either. You should rather stop wasting our time and your council money.</p> |
| <p>I have no idea when or where I may be housed. Monthly updates on my housing application.</p>   |  |  |  |
| <p>More information NEEDS to be provided/clear about whether or not houses are furnished or unfurnished. Details and photos of properties should be a PRIORITY.</p>   |  |  |  |
|   |  |  | <p>Just be careful about disabled people/low intelligence.</p>   |

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| Have never been told my position on list, I have been on the list for a number of years.               |   |  |   |
| Not sure.  |   |  | Nothing else to say.  |
|  | i took the first house i was offered after months of waiting with a son who had no bedroom. If i had the option of waiting i would not have chose this house which is as old fashioned as the council house i grew up in in the 80s - no shower in 2018 is not good enough!! But like i said, i was desperate and took the first house i was offered as the other bidding did not work! |  | I feel more money should be put towards doing up the older houses and not building more. Or charging people who are in old houses with very expensive heating bills to pay for others to get on the list. Try taking more care of the tenants you allready have. The ones like me who work very hard to pay there own rent and council tax who don't get everything paid for them but stil get the old houses with the most expensive heating. Maybe some council workers should live in one of the oldest houses with the heating over the winter and then ask them if they would like to pay more?? |
| I think better communication on where you are on the list would be beneficial rather than not knowing. |   |  |   |
|  | NO.   | These surveys are an utter waste of money. When OIC are so short of cash!! | When will OIC stop sending surveys? I am sick of receiving them.  |
|  |   |  | This scheme should leave less properties being empty for so long and should speed things up for everybody. Good to see the OIC having progressive ideas.  |

|  |   |   |   |
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| The opportunity to find out exactly my position on the register via online viewing.  |   |   |   |
|  | Yes as I have already done this through OHAL. |   |   |
|  | Only if vacant and if it met my needs.        |   |   |
|  |   |   | enough money is being wasted by OIC departments without having anymore "consultations"! |
| Neither. No houses to apply for with added requirements needed.  |   | Not if Orkney Islands Council adopts the same system as Pembrokeshire County Council. |   |
| We stay in Kirriemuir and would wish to be kept informed.  |   |   | Thank you very much.  |
| Well I have not had any communication from you about housing placement ever. I have been on the list for about 5 years now so what next. |   |   |   |

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| <p>I have no one have so would never use this so why should I pay.</p>  | <p>No interest.</p>  |   |   |
|   |  | <p>If I need help I can call and find the staff very helpful and understanding.</p> |   |
| <p>I was given a place last year (a flat/bungalow) but because I could not afford the actual move from Edinburgh to Orkney (price of moving up). I was penalised for the duration of one year. I would have loved to have accepted the offer.</p> |  |   |   |
|   | <p>I would be very intrested in vacant properties. I would be willing to decorate the house with me paying the cost.</p> |   | <p>I would like to move the isle and willing to take any kind except flats. Thank you. Mr Ian Barker.</p> |
| <p>It should keep you informed at what step of the ladder you are at.</p>   |  |   |   |



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| <p>I have never been told my chances of being allocated a house I completed an application form and received confirmation of this that's it. I have no idea where I am on the list or how people are chosen.</p>  |  |  |   |
| <p>No I have just been told there is no chance of me getting a council house at all. I understand homeless people, people with medical needs etc. are priority but to have no chance of getting one at any point unless my circumstances change is not good enough.</p> | <p>If that information was widely available.</p>   |  | <p>I have no information on the point system and how long i am likley to wait to get a house.</p>   |
|   |  |  | <p>Giving people the chance to apply for specific homes would eliminate the awful practice of being offered a property, rejecting it for valid reasons and then being penalised for rejecting something wich someone else things you should have. I am in a property with 2 gardens I cannot manage but which the housing department said there was no alternative.</p> |
|   | <p>I would feel confident in registering an interest for a vacant property. I feel it would be a fairer system and would hopefully, cut out the usual comments of "how did they get that house etc".</p> |  | <p>I am enclosing, along with this completed form, another form I received on the same day, in a seperate envelope, to my address (both addressed to me) an extra 39p postage. A few of these would soon incur extra costs, bearing in mind the</p>   |

|   |   |     |  |
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|   |   |     | proposed increased costs of advertising, falling on the tenants rents.   |
|   | An option/ link for registering interest online would be good. Seems a bit strange having to phone OHAL to bid for a property after looking at it on their website. |     |  |
|   |   |     | OHAL already see, to be advertising their properties in this way. I assume that it is working for them?  |
| Yes, the answer was "very little chance!"   | I'd have a fat chance of bidding!<br>"No points and no priority."   |     |  |
| I had no clue how much chance I had at a house, all I knew was that I was priority, tons of other people could have had higher priority - I was clueless. | N/A   | N/A | N/A  |
| It would be interesting to know where you are on the waiting list and roughly how long you would expect to wait until a house is available for you.       |   |     | I was sent this letter & form in duplicate, personally I am a tenant and an applicant. If the council is so keen on saving money, then an email could have been sent to all applicants and tenants who have email addresses, thus saving the cost of paper/printing/postage. |

|   |   |   |   |
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|   |   |   | As I say we (me & my wife) are registered to apply for a one bedroom property after being assessed and we are both of the opinion that it is absolutely fair way of doing this - "If it ain't broke don't mend it" - No probs with the system at all - Thank you! |
|   |   |   | The system in place seems to work very well! Why change it!   |
|   |   |   | I think the people could play the system. Some people would not get considered.   |
| Maybe Orkney Council could use other methods of advertisement.  | Yes I would be interested in registering in bidding for a house up in Orkney but at present I am undergoing chemotherapy and a wide range of different tests and appointments since being diagnosed ( Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis) a form of bone cancer and treatment at present is still ongoing. | At present most of my time is used up with appointments at present with the bone cancer that I have at present. Also a lot of my time is used up in myself helping my manic depression that I have suffered from the last 20 years. | I love going up to Sandy to visit my sister and husband and I also love the atmosphere, the lovely scenery, the peace, the beautiful walls etc. Kind Regards  |
| After my application for a house, I was offered one immediately of which I couldn't accommodate, given notice of 1 week. Since then, March, I have received nothing & have no idea how long it will take to move & I was hoping before my son went into 2nd year @ high school. | I do think you should be advised of how far down the list you are.  | Currently bidding on every property with OHAL   | Please, please, help us to get a home. We are so keen to begin our journey & the first stop in a new home in Orkney :(  |

|   |   |   |   |
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| Allocate in order of needs.   |   |   | I need a house with no steps, on a bus route, 1 bedroom. Turned down last offer as it had none of the first two requirements. I think they said I would be taken off the list.  |
| Have had no contact from you in years!  |   |   | I am 100% against CBL it is not the way forward!  |
|   | Because previous experience showed CBL does not work. |   | Please rethink plans for CBL it will leave some feeling they don't have a chance. Offer available properties to people according to NEED and property suitability. No system is totally foolproof and or resistant to manipulation. |
| I never know of any council houses available for let.                               | Do it all the time for OHAL.                          | Can use internet.   | Please make it fairer to local people who work, don't do drugs or pop out children constantly. We are being missed and it's not fair.   |
| I'm sure most applicants would like to know where on the "league table" they stand. |   |   |   |
|   |   | If we had a property a telephone call to your dept. or dept. looking after it would be a huge help to be given over internet via email. |   |

|  |                                     |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>If I had a query I'd be happy to contact someone in Housing for help.</p> |                                     |  | <p>I have no idea how often people refuse properties offered and as a result how long properties can stand empty. I wonder though, if turning down one property warrants a years penalty? I fully appreciate if someone is applying for social housing and are not really in a position to refuse, an offer but still, I think sometimes, there may be good reasons. Just a thought.</p> |
|  |                                     |  | <p>This leaflet to me is very confusing. I don't know what to fill in or not or even why.</p>  |
|  | <p>I am not entirely confident.</p> | <p>Probably the first time, I would need some assistance, but after some experience, I might manage by myself.</p> |  |



# Equality Impact Assessment

## Budget Setting

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

| <b>1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| Name of proposal to be assessed.  | Introduction of choice based lettings   |
| Service / service area responsible.   | Housing Services  |
| Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.                                 | Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services Ext 2177 E-mail <a href="mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk">frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk</a> |
| Date of assessment.   | 22 August 2018  |
| What kind of spending decision is this? For example savings option or service pressures option. | Existing  |

| <b>2. Initial Screening</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| What are the intended outcomes of the proposal?                          | To consider introducing choice based lettings.   |
| State who is, or may be affected by this proposal and how.               | Applicants for Council housing and by default current tenants of Council housing (the latter due to the potential impact on rent).   |
| How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal? | A consultation has been undertaken which has included both applicants for Council housing and also existing tenants. The consultation was issued in hard copy and also available online. |
| Is there any existing data and /   | Detailed research has been undertaken into the   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see engagement and consultation resources on OIC information portal).</p> | <p>wider field of allocations including choice based lettings.</p> <p>As regards choice based lettings specifically CAB have identified that choice based lettings can be an issue for particular groups within society as already outlined in this EqlA. The mitigation suggested would be appropriate.</p> |
| <p>Could the proposal have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>   | <p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>  |
| <p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society. Applicants whose first language is not English may require some assistance to apply for Council housing.</p>  |
| <p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p>  | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p>  | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>5. Pregnancy and maternity.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>6. Age: people of different ages.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).</p>  | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>8. Caring responsibilities.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society.</p>   |
| <p>10. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).</p>   | <p>No not specifically. Applicants / tenants may come from any group within society. People with certain types of disability may require some support to apply for properties.</p>   |

### 3. Impact Assessment

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?       | Yes, there is a potential differential impact if an applicant's first language was not English or where the applicant had certain disabilities.  |
| How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?                            | The Council's website provides assistance in respect of translation into a broad range of other languages, it also allows the use of Browse Aloud for those with visual impairments. The Housing Service's Accessibility Policy requires that reasonable adjustments are made to assist those who require additional support to access services. |
| Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require? | Yes  |
| *Risk is rated as   | Medium   |

\*Definition of risk ratings:

**Low:** No mitigation required. The assessment demonstrates that there is no / low disproportionate impact on any of the protected characteristics. Primarily this is where savings proposals are focused on systems and process rather than people related services.

**Medium:** Mitigation identified. The assessment has identified a differential or negative impact on one or more of the protected characteristics but can be mitigated by some other action. The assessment includes specific mitigating actions which will reduce the impact.

**High:** No mitigation. The assessment has identified an impact on one or more of the protected characteristics and no mitigating action has been identified to reduce this. Or the information has not provided a sufficiently robust understanding of the impact of the proposal.

### 4. Conclusions and Planned Action

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Is further work required?  | Yes/No. |
| What action is to be taken in order to mitigate the impact identified? | N/A     |
| Who will undertake it?   | N/A     |
| When will it be done?<br>(please provide specific dates).              | N/A     |
| How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).                | N/A     |



Date: 22 August 2018

Signature:



Name: Frances Troup

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to Paul Kemp at [paul.kemp@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:paul.kemp@orkney.gov.uk)