East Lindsey District Council – Housing Allocation Scheme

In partnership with Waterloo Housing Group and Homes Direct

OFFERING QUALITY HOMES AT AFFORDABLE RENTS

September 2015
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Working in close partnership with East Lindsey District Council, Waterloo Housing Group maintains a Housing Housing Register which provides a Choice Based Letting Scheme whereby people can access affordable housing within the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) area.

The CBL area is mainly the district of East Lindsey but may also include some properties from across Lincolnshire owned by the Waterloo Housing Group or other housing providers.

1.2 The Scheme enables registered applicants to bid for properties for which they are eligible, in the areas of their choice.

1.3 The purpose of the Scheme is to make the process of registering for an affordable home as simple and quick as possible. By completing one on-line registration process (www.homesdirect.org.uk), applicants needing an affordable home become eligible to bid for housing in the location of their choice. In addition to Waterloo Housing Group properties, properties owned by other social housing providers in Lincolnshire may be let through this scheme.

1.4 There is also accommodation providers who offer supported short and long term housing to people with particular support needs. These providers may be contacted where the type of support required cannot be provided by Waterloo Housing Group or other providers referred to at 1.3. Due to the nature of the accommodation provided and the support offered, these providers do not directly participate in the scheme. However, suitable applicants can be referred to these Providers.

2 VISION OF THE POLICY – OUR STATEMENT ON CHOICE

2.1 Waterloo Housing Group (Waterloo) and East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) are fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need from Lincolnshire or those needing to move to the area. The Policy aims to be as open and transparent as possible and to offer the widest possible choice to people looking for an affordable home.

2.2 The main objectives of the Policy are:-


- To comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 when allocating accommodation and not to allocate accommodation except in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 and this scheme

- To take account of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy, Local Authority Housing Strategies and Tenancy Strategies.
• To provide a fair, open and accountable framework in which everyone has equality of access when seeking an affordable home.

• To welcome applicants seeking independent advice this may include Shelter and/or Citizens Advice Bureau’s.

• To ensure that the best use of limited housing resources is made and that balanced and stable communities are maintained.

• To ensure that quality and accessible advice about the Scheme is freely available to everyone, especially to those who may have difficulty in registering to join the scheme.

• To ensure all applicants are aware of and understand the Scheme and the ways in which they can apply for a home.

• To provide assistance to applicants of the Scheme who are unable, for whatever reason, to participate fully in the Scheme without help, support or advocacy.

• To ensure that good quality information leaflets and property details are easily available.

• To provide registration options that are easy to complete for all sections of the community.

• To provide a guide on the Scheme to all applicants giving them information on how to register and how to bid.

• To provide a bidding process that is easy to access for all applicants of the Scheme.

• To prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation through an effective prioritization system.

3 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

3.1 Waterloo and ELDC have signed up to this Policy and are committed to working together to deliver high quality housing services. The day to day administration of the Housing Housing Register is the responsibility of Waterloo. However, letting homes through the Scheme is the responsibility of the individual housing providers.

3.2 Waterloo offers an advertising service for other social housing providers in order to generate interest from suitable applicants. A charge may be made to the Housing provider for each property advertised or for being a member of the scheme.

4 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

4.1 Waterloo and ELDC are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all existing and potential applicants wishing to access the Scheme. No one will be treated unfairly because of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, age, sexuality, health or other reason. This list
is not intended to be exclusive, but indicative of the intention and commitment to ensuring equality.

4.2 Waterloo and ELDC aim to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity throughout the community. Copies of each organisation’s equality policies are available on request.

4.3 Some offices are accessible and fitted with loop system for the hard of hearing.

4.4 In appropriate cases Waterloo and ELDC will seek to provide wherever possible interpretation and translation facilities, within a reasonable timescale, as well as using alternative or additional methods of communication.

5 HOUSING OPTIONS

5.1 Due to the high demand on social housing some applicants may have to wait a considerable time before appropriate accommodation is made available to them, particularly in areas of high demand for social housing and/or where the applicant has low priority. In some cases, applicants may have little prospect of ever being allocated accommodation. In order to give such applicants a wider choice Waterloo aims to provide information, or signpost applicants to the appropriate agency, about other appropriate housing options which might be available to them. This might include:

- **Private rented accommodation** - the private rented sector can provide types and sizes of dwellings which may not be readily available within the social rented sector. For those with a lower priority under the CBL scheme, and who may be waiting a considerable time before they are offered accommodation, a vacancy in the private rented sector may offer a quicker and equally suitable housing solution.

- **Shared ownership schemes** – for those people who cannot afford to buy a home outright on the open market, shared ownership allows the applicant to purchase a share of a property and pay rent on the remainder. See [www.waterloohomes.org.uk](http://www.waterloohomes.org.uk) or [www.helpstopbuymidlands.co.uk](http://www.helpstopbuymidlands.co.uk) for further details.

- **Mutual exchanges & mobility schemes** – possibly a quicker way of moving, rather than applying for a transfer. Tenants find another Housing Association or Council tenant to swap their homes with, providing they have the agreement of their landlord. Homes Direct Exchange scheme, Homeswapper and House Exchange are examples of additional ways to register an interest in moving in this way.

- **Home improvement schemes or provision of aids and adaptations** – these may enable applicants to remain in their existing accommodation for longer.

6 SERVICE STANDARDS

6.1 Waterloo publicise their service standards on their website at [www.waterloo.org.uk](http://www.waterloo.org.uk). These service standards outline the service levels that all our customers can expect to receive when dealing with Waterloo Housing Group.
Waterloo will also apply the following service standards within the Allocations Scheme to ensure an excellent service is provided to scheme applicants.

- Use Plain English, and avoid using jargon, in all our correspondence.
- If you finish in position number 1 on a property shortlist, contact will be made with you within 48 hours after close of the bidding cycle if your bid has been successful.
- Give you 48 hours notice if we are inviting you to view a property.
- Publicise details on the number of bids, the priority banding and registration date of the successful bidder for each home advertised.
- Offer the use of a private interview room, if available, when discussing personal details.
- Respect the confidential nature of information provided by or in respect of an applicant.
- Provide support for applicants who are determined as ‘vulnerable’. Support can be in the form of one of the following options:
  - Telephone advice and guidance
  - An appointment with a Waterloo colleague for assistance in registering to the scheme

Vulnerable includes but is not restricted to those who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Those with communication difficulties i.e. language / literacy
- Those with difficulties accessing transport
- Those with Learning Disabilities
- Those at risk of Domestic Abuse
- Those with a support worker
- Those with sensory / physical disability

Waterloo will determine vulnerability through completion of a checklist which will be completed upon first point of contact with an applicant.

7 WHO CAN REGISTER?

7.1 Anyone has the right to make an application to join the Scheme by completing an online application through Homes Direct at [www.homesdirect.org.uk](http://www.homesdirect.org.uk). Some applicants will be ineligible or will not qualify for inclusion onto the housing register.

Applicants should generally be aged 18 years or over. In the case of joint applications, at least one party should normally be aged 18. Special provisions apply to 16-17 year olds, see section 7.4.

Applications from the following groups will be considered.

7.2 Persons not subject to immigration control taking account of nationality and immigration. The main customer groups to whom properties will be let to are:

  - British citizens
  - certain Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK
o Irish citizens, who are not subject to immigration control in the UK because the Republic of Ireland forms part of the Common Travel Area

o EEA nationals, and their family members, who have a right to reside in the UK that derives from EU law. Whether an EEA national (or family member) has a particular right to reside in the UK (or another Member State) will depend on the circumstances, particularly their economic status (e.g. whether he or she is a worker, self-employed, a student, or economically inactive)

o persons who are exempt from immigration control under the Immigration Acts, including diplomats and their family members based in the UK, and some military personnel.

7.3 Persons subject to immigration control who have been granted:

o refugee status: granted 5 years' limited leave to remain in the UK

o granted exceptional leave to enter or remain in the UK without condition that they and any dependants should make no recourse to public funds: granted for a limited period where there are compelling humanitarian or compassionate circumstances for allowing them to stay. However, if leave is granted on condition that the applicant and any dependants are not a charge on public funds, the applicant will not be eligible for an allocation of accommodation.

o current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation, and who is habitually resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (the Common Travel Area): such a person will have indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or remain (ILR) and is regarded as having settled status. However, where ILE or ILR status is granted as a result of an undertaking that a sponsor will be responsible for the applicant's maintenance and accommodation, the person must have been resident in the Common Travel Area for five years since the date of entry or the date of the sponsorship undertaking, whichever is later - to be eligible. Where all sponsors have died within the first five years, the applicant will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation.

o humanitarian protection granted under the Immigration Rules: a form of leave granted to persons who do not qualify for refugee status but would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to their state of origin

7.4 The following persons from abroad are eligible for an allocation of accommodation even if they are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area:

o an EEA national who is in the UK as a worker (which has the same meaning as in regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations)

o an EEA national who is in the UK as a self-employed person (which has the same meaning as in regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations)

o a person who is treated as a worker for the purposes of regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations, pursuant to the Accession (Immigration and Worker Authorisation) Regulations 2006 (ie nationals of Bulgaria and Romania required to be authorised by
the Home Office to work until they have accrued 12 months uninterrupted authorised work)

- a person who is a family member of a person referred to in (a) to (c) above
- a person with a right to reside permanently in the UK by virtue of regulation 15(c), (d) or (e) of the EEA Regulations
- a person who left Montserrat after 1 November 1995 because of the effect of volcanic activity there
- a person who is in the UK as a result of his deportation, expulsion or other removal by compulsion of law from another country to the UK. This could include EEA nationals, if the person was settled in the UK and exercising EU Treaty rights prior to deportation from the third country. Where deportation occurs, most countries will signal this in the person’s passport

- Applications from 16/17 year olds will also be accepted where they are:
  - A single woman aged 16 or 17 who is expecting a child. Proof of pregnancy will be required in all cases.
  - A single parent aged 16 or 17 who has a dependent child.
  - A couple aged 16 or 17 who are expecting a child, or have a dependent child. In the former case, proof of pregnancy will be required.
  - People aged 16 or 17 who are homeless. In such cases a referral will made to Children’s Services to identify appropriate housing and support needs. This process may include other agencies such as Health, Probation, and Youth Offending Teams.
  - Leaving care

Some housing providers require 16/17 year olds accepted for housing to have a guarantor and/or sign up for support from the housing provider or their agent where satisfactory support is not in place from statutory agencies.

7.5 Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK. Any person making an application who is identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act. We reserve the right to seek independent advice and assistance to resolve the issue of eligibility.

7.6 Those who CANNOT join the Choice Based Letting Scheme are:

- Persons subject to immigration control who do not fall within 7.3.
- Persons granted exceptional leave to enter or remain but not to have recourse to public funds.
- A person may also be excluded from the scheme as a result of previous unsuitable behaviour or conduct defined as anti social within the meaning of the Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, the severity of which makes them unsuitable to hold a tenancy. In assessing this, all relevant factors will be taken into account. This includes but is not limited to, the time that has elapsed since the offences or occurrences of anti social
behaviour occurred, the applicant’s health, dependents and the individual circumstances of the applicant at the point of applying when making these decisions.

- Behaviour which can be regarded as unacceptable includes conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person, conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person’s occupation of residential premises, or conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person. In addition to this behaviour which has either directly or indirectly affected the housing management function of a Registered Provider or Local Authority. This includes as aforementioned, anti social behaviour, non-payment of rent, obtaining a tenancy by way of making a false statements, acts of neglect of waste leading to damage to the previous property. This list is illustrative and the examples are not intended to be an exhaustive.

- A person will only normally be excluded from the Housing Register where such behaviour would likely have or did lead to a Possession Order be it outright or suspended being granted, the tenancy has been demoted, the Court has granted an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance, Criminal Behaviour Order, a Public Spaces Protection Order or other enforceable court order being issued or the Local Authority has enforced a noise abatement notice. Such exclusions may be made regardless of previous tenure.

- When reaching a decision to refuse a registration because of unacceptable/ anti social behaviour, all the relevant factors that a Court would consider before making any order will be taken into account. A decision will also be made on the length of time that the application will be excluded stating the reasons why and the actions that can be undertaken to enable an application to be re-considered earlier.

7.7 Those who **MAY NOT** be considered for the Scheme or who may be removed from the Scheme are:-

- those applicants who have deliberately worsened their circumstances. (see sections 27 & 28).

- those applicants whose application has little or no prospects of receiving an offer of accommodation. This is likely to apply to those applicants seeking accommodation whose application does not fall into bands 1 to 3.

- those with no local connection to Lincolnshire (see section 26) other than:
  - members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge
  - bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner
  - serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
• Other exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis. Such cases will usually include those where applicants are deemed at serious risk of harm

7.8 If an applicant is refused access to join the scheme they will be given Band EX, this will be identified on the Banding summary page on Homes Direct. If an applicant has been refused access to join the scheme for one of the following reasons they will be notified in writing of the decision and grounds for refusing access to/removal from the scheme within 15 working days.

• Worsening own circumstances
• Anti-social behaviour or involvement in criminal activity
• Giving false information on their application form

Depending on the severity of the above reasons for exclusion, applicants will be advised that they may re-apply after a period of 12 months. However in serious cases, the exclusion period may be longer and up to 2 years.

7.9 Applicants who have previously been deemed not to qualify may make a fresh application if they consider they should now be treated as qualifying, but it will be for the applicant to show that his or her circumstances have changed.

7.10 Band EX applicants might be able to bid for low demand properties that have previously been advertised and had no interest from eligible applicants. These properties will be advertised on the Homes Direct website.

8 PROVIDING INFORMATION

8.1 Applicants are required to provide proof of their National Insurance Number(s), photographic ID in the form of passport or photo driving licence and proof of local connection. This will normally be requested prior to the offer of a property but providing this at an earlier stage can reduce delays at offer stage.

8.2 In accepting any registration which includes anyone from abroad, proof of identification, nationality and immigration status will be required. Verification will be sought to safeguard the use and allocation of public funds.

8.3 In order to determine the priority a Registration receives, a duty is placed upon the applicant(s) to provide any and all information reasonably required by Waterloo. Such information may extend beyond that requested during the Registration process. Until all required information is provided the application may not be eligible to bid or may bid from a temporary (lower band) until details for the application have been provided.

8.4 Where there are concerns about a person’s suitability as a tenant rising from information given during registration, Waterloo will make any necessary enquiries, including via the police, to check information given about applications. The declaration Applicants sign on the Registration form gives permission for such enquiries, if necessary.

8.5 It is important that the information provided by applicants is accurate to determine the correct priority that the Registration receives. The Housing Act 1996 section 171 states that a person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under this Part – (a)
he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material particular, or (b) he knowingly withholds information which the authority have reasonably required him to give in connection with the exercise of those functions.’ The offence is punishable on summary conviction by magistrates by a fine of up to £5000.

9 BANDING PRIORITIES

9.1 A Banding Scheme has been adopted to prioritise the housing needs of applicants. The Banding Scheme has four bands (1+, 1, 2 and 3) based on the applicant’s current housing circumstances. They have been adopted following guidance issued by the Secretary of State and all eligible registrations are placed into one of these bands.

Registrations are generally prioritised first by band, and secondly by date - see Section 21 for further details.

9.2 If an applicant is assessed as having two or more identified needs within a band, consideration is given to raising the application into a higher band. For example:

- An applicant who has been assessed as having three or more Band 3 needs is placed into Band 2
- An applicant who has been assessed as having two or more Band 2 needs is placed into Band 1.

Where the needs are similar, applications are unlikely to move into a higher band. For example a person of no fixed abode would be placed into band 2 but would not be moved into band 1 due to also lacking facilities.

9.3 Additional preference can be awarded to applicants who are considered to be in high housing need (bands 1 & 2) in the following circumstances:

- Current and former members of the armed forces; who:
  1. is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person’s service,
  2. formerly served in the regular forces,
  3. has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person’s spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
  4. is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person’s service.

- Persons who are terminally ill and must move to suitable accommodation
- Other exceptional circumstances
An award of additional preference would mean the date the application is placed into the assessed band would be backdated by up to 5 years for points 1, 3 and 4 and by 1 year for point 2 dependent upon the circumstances.

9.4 Housing Priority can be reduced or even taken away in certain situations, for example:

- Circumstances have changed which materially affect the assessment of the application.
- Applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances

Where priority has been reduced or changed, applicants will always be notified through their online application on Homes Direct via the banding summary page. Where the applicant provides an email address, an email will be sent to them with a copy of their recently amended application.

9.5 Applicants who are ineligible to register will be given a Band EX status. This identifies that the applicant is excluded from the East Lindsey scheme.

**BAND 1+ (Also see section 13 – Homelessness)**

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<th>The applicant has been accepted as statutorily homeless by East Lindsey District Council</th>
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<td>1.2+</td>
<td>Lincolnshire Children Services (East Lindsey area) are supporting a homeless young person aged 16 &amp;17 as a ‘Child in Need’ who has not become homeless intentionally.</td>
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**BAND 1**

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<th>The applicant has been accepted as statutorily homeless by a Local Authority other than ELDC</th>
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<th>1.2</th>
<th>The applicant is threatened with homelessness through no fault of their own within the next TWO months and in priority need as determined by the Local Authority, in accordance with homelessness legislation</th>
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| 1.3 | The household is assessed as needing at least two or more bedrooms than currently available. This is assessed under the space standards contained within Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 or assessed using the HHSRS set out in the Housing Act 2004. |

- Children of the same sex and from the same household can share a bedroom until the oldest child reaches the age of 16
- Children of the opposite sex can share a bedroom until the oldest child reaches the age of 10

Households who live with other households are only placed into this band if they have NOT deliberately made the circumstances worse. If they have, their application will be moved to status EX, which means that they are excluded from the scheme.

People who cannot reasonably be classed as being from the same household are NOT counted within this category e.g. short term lodgers

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<th>The applicant or a member of their household has been awarded High Medical Priority. Medical banding is based on how and why your current living conditions are not appropriate to your medical needs</th>
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| 1.5 | The property in which the applicant lives is subject to a Direction, Demolition, |
Compulsory Purchase Order or Category 1 Hazard, with a prohibition order being made. Applicant do NOT qualify for this band if such orders have been made because they have failed to satisfactorily maintain their own property or because the disrepair has been caused by them and had the financial means to prevent the disrepair

1.6 The applicant is a retiring agricultural worker who falls under ADHAC (Agricultural Dwelling-House Advisory Committee) and their home is required for a new employee

1.7 The applicant is a tenant of a registered housing provider living in permanent accommodation within the area of East Lindsey and no longer needs the property because of its extensive disabled adaptations

1.8 The applicant or a member of their household needs extensive disabled adaptations and is prepared to move to a property with such adaptations rather than having them done at their current home. Evidence from an OT/or copy of the DFG referral will be required

1.9 The applicant is a tenant of a registered housing provider living in permanent accommodation within the area of East Lindsey who is releasing 2 or more bedrooms to move to a smaller property

1.10 The applicant is suffering from harassment or domestic abuse and it is considered that the accommodation is unreasonable to occupy as defined in the homelessness legislation and determined by the Local Authority. Any recommendations made by a MARAC will be taken into consideration, where appropriate. A risk assessment must be conducted in accordance with MARAC for all offers of accommodation in such cases

1.11 The applicant has two or more housing needs as set out in Band 2

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**BAND 2**

2.1 The applicant currently lives in supported accommodation in Lincolnshire (excluding sheltered housing for older people and where floating support is being provided) and has been assessed as being ready to move into independent living

2.2 The applicant has been determined by the Local Authority or Framework Rough Sleeper Outreach Service to be a rough sleeper or of No Fixed Abode by the Housing Options Team

2.3 The applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness through no fault of their own within the next TWO months but not in priority need as determined by the Local Authority, in accordance with homelessness legislation

2.4 The applicant is a tenant of a registered housing provider living in permanent accommodation within the area of East Lindsey who is releasing 1 bedroom to move to a smaller property

2.5 The applicant or a member of their household has been awarded Medium Medical Priority. Medical banding is based on how and why your current living conditions are not appropriate to your medical needs

2.6 The household is assessed as needing one more bedroom than currently available. This is assessed under the space standards contained within Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 or assessed using the HHSRS set out in the Housing Act 2004.

- Children of the same sex and from the same household can share a bedroom until the oldest child reaches the age of 16
- Children of the opposite sex can share a bedroom until the oldest child reaches the age of 10
Households who live with other households are only placed into this band if they have NOT deliberately made the circumstances worse. If they have, they are placed in Band EX/removed from the list.

People who cannot reasonably be classed as being from the same household are NOT counted within this category e.g. short term lodgers.

2.7 The applicant’s current home is assessed as permanently lacking or the applicant is unable to access basic essential facilities and it is through no fault of their own, such as:

- an inside toilet
- hot and cold running water
- bathing facilities
- mains services i.e. electrical / water supplies

This category excludes caravans/mobile homes unless on a permanent site. It will not be used where any of the above has been caused by the occupier.

2.8 The property in which the applicant lives is subject to a Category 1 Hazard, as per HHSRS legislation (written confirmation required).

2.9 A household with dependent children unable to live together as a family unit (this is defined as spouse/partner/children) and wishes to live with them.

2.10 The applicant is experiencing undue financial hardship which is a direct result of current housing circumstances. To fall into this band the situation must be;

- one that is not likely to be short lived
- one that is not/has not been caused by a deliberate act or omission and,
- one that the applicant is unable to have any reasonable control over
- The circumstances make their current home unaffordable in terms of rent and utilities where they previously could have afforded it.

A full financial assessment will be undertaken as the basis for placing/not placing registrations into this category.

2.11 A household with dependent children lodging and sharing facilities with friends or family.

2.12 The welfare of the household is being severely affected by the current accommodation or location, this could include:

- The applicant is currently unemployed and has been offered permanent employment (seasonal work not considered) and must move to be able to carry out the job.
- The applicant is currently unemployed and needs to move to access full time education/training that cannot be accessed in their current location.
- The applicants needs to move to provide long term care and support. This could include foster carers and those approved to adopt who need to move to a larger property.
- The applicant is severely isolated and must move to access vital services.

Each case will be assessed on individual circumstances.
2.13 The applicant has three or more housing needs as set out within Band 3

**BAND 3**

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<th>3.1</th>
<th>The applicant has housing need that would ordinarily place them into Band 1 or 2 but has been found Intentionally Homeless within the last 6 months and has not had a settled home in that time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>A household without dependent children lodging and sharing facilities with friends or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>The applicant’s relationship with their partner has broken down and they do not have the legal right to live there or the financial means to secure alternative accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>The applicant or a member of their household has been awarded Low Medical Priority. Medical banding is based on how and why your current living conditions are not appropriate to your medical needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The applicant’s existing tenancy is insecure i.e. an assured shorthold tenancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>The households welfare is being affected by the current accommodation or location, this could include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The applicant has been offered employment (including seasonal work) and wishes to move nearer to the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The applicant or family member wishes to move to access education/training that cannot be accessed in their current location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The applicant wishes to move to provide long term care and support. This could those applying to become foster carers or to adopt and need to move to a larger property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The applicant is isolated and wishes to move to access services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each case will be assessed on individual circumstances

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10 MEDICAL BANDING

10.1 An assessment of medical need is made by the Waterloo Housing Group Homes Direct team using an agreed criterion and by seeking additional supporting evidence and reports from medical professionals. If the assessment places an applicant into a higher band, then the registration will be re-dated to the date of the assessment. If the assessment does not change the band into which the registration falls, the existing effective date and banding remains unchanged.

10.2 There are FOUR recommendations that can be returned:

- High Priority – Registration placed into Band 1
- Medium Priority – Registration placed into Band 2
- Low Priority – Registration placed into Band 3; or
- No Priority.

10.3 The Assessor determines medical priority based on the current housing circumstances in relation to the illness or disability of the applicant or household member (who is moving with them). This will include an assessment of the persons need to move to receive support.
10.4 Waterloo will consider a request for a further medical assessment if it is satisfied that there has been a significant change in the medical circumstances of the applicant or their household.

11 REASONABLE PREFERENCE

11.1 The law states that certain groups of people have ‘reasonable preference’ within any scheme of allocation. These groups are:-

- People who are homeless (within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;

- People who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and who are in priority need who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 193 (2) or 195 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (or under Section 65 (2) or 68 (2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under Section 192 (3);

- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;

- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to disability;

- People who need to move to a particular locality in the area, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

12 RIGHT TO MOVE

12.1 The Government is committed to increasing mobility for social tenants to enable tenants to meet their aspirations, and to support them into work. The likelihood of obtaining social housing in East Lindsey due to employment reasons is very low therefore to meet the below statutory guidance a minimum of 1% of vacancies will be allocated to applicants meeting the statutory provisions. This will be monitored on a monthly basis and if the percentage is not being achieved a number of properties will be advertised giving preference to applicants who meet the provisions.

12.2 The applicant must evidence that they need to move rather than wish to move.

12.3 The work must not be short term or marginal in nature, nor ancillary to work in another district. Voluntary work is also excluded but apprenticeships will be considered.

12.4 Each application would be assessed on its merits taking account of the statutory guidance

13 HOMELESSNESS

13.1 In cases where ELDC has accepted a main housing duty as statutorily homeless, applicants will be placed into Band 1+ which gives additional priority for bids placed on properties. Such applicants are required to make bids on the first suitable property that they are eligible for, from the date that they have been accepted as homeless. Homeless cases will be monitored, and if applicants fail to make bids, ELDC will bid on their behalf for properties which meets their needs and they are eligible for. If an applicant refuses a successful bid, the homelessness duty to them will be discharged but a right to a review is available. In such cases they will no longer have reasonable preference awarded and the application will be re-assessed.

13.2 Where statutorily homeless applicants have a housing related debt they could be placed into temporary accommodation under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, during this time an affordable repayment agreement will be made with them to repay the debt. This will allow applicant(s) to place bids, however, they will not be offered a property unless the debt has been cleared or regular payments have been made to reduce the debt over a period of time determined by the relevant housing provider.

13.3 Statutorily homeless applicants might also be considered for an offer of accommodation in the private sector. This could result in the homelessness duty being discharged.

13.4 Anyone provided with a temporary tenancy pursuant to a homeless application will be required to update their application and continue to bid on suitable properties.

13.5 In cases where Lincolnshire Children Services (East Lindsey area) are supporting a homeless young person aged 16 &17 as a ‘Child in Need’, the application will be placed into band 1+ if they have not become homeless intentionally. Children’s Services would need to make this request and provide appropriate evidence to confirm the young person did not become homeless intentionally.

14 ROUGH SLEEPING

14.1 Defined as being street homeless and having access to no accommodation at all. People of ‘No Fixed Abode’, who are for example staying at various locations on an ad hoc basis, are not regarded as rough sleepers.

15 NO FIXED ABODE

15.1 Applicants who claim that they are of no fixed abode have to satisfy Waterloo or ELDC that they genuinely have no settled accommodation and are living at various locations for very short periods of time.

15.2 In confirming cases where applicants claim that they are of no fixed abode, proof may be sought from each address and/or other agencies with which they are registered.
16  

HOUSING RELATED DEBTS  

16.1 Where an applicant(s) has any current/former rent arrears or other housing related debt they may be accepted onto the housing register and placed in the appropriate band. This allows applicant(s) to place bids. However, they will not be offered a property unless one of the following criteria has been met:

- The debt is cleared in full
- The debt is halved and a payment arrangement is made to clear the remaining debt owed within 6 months
- The applicant already has a payment arrangement in place and has consistently kept to this for 6 months

16.2 All applicants will be informed of this decision in writing, and how their application could be re-assessed, for example, by agreeing an arrangement to make regular payments to reduce the debt and maintain payments over a period of time.

16.3 Applicants are expected to clear any current/former rent arrears or other housing related debts before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or significant savings to draw on).

17  

FINANCIAL CAPACITY  

17.1 All households applying to the scheme are assessed for their ability to buy their own home, or adapt their own home to meet their assessed needs. Assets that may be taken into consideration when assessing financial capacity may include but are not limited to savings, shares, bonds, commercial property, residential property, property abroad and money apportioned through the proceeds of a divorce settlement, inheritance or any form of cash windfall. An allocation will not be made where an applicant(s) owns a property that would be reasonable for them to live in or where, if they sold it, they could afford to buy another property in the area.

17.2 In determining the priority an applicant receives within the scheme, the following are considered:

- Whether the applicant(s) can sell their current home.
- The expected equity after the proposed sale of the property.
- The applicant(s) current financial circumstances and commitments.
- Whether the applicant(s) will be eligible for a mortgage.
- The supply of accommodation suitable for the applicant(s) specific needs on the private market for either sale or rent.
- Whether the applicant(s) housing need can be met in the private market taking into consideration the cost of housing within the district.
- Whether adaptation of the present property is a viable option.
- Whether significant care and support needs would impact on the ability of the applicant to secure and maintain accommodation.

17.3 An allocation will not be made to an applicant who can obtain and afford a mortgage to buy a property within the area by using their assets and income.
18 **HOUSING SUPPORT**

18.1 A range of support services are available throughout the area and are there to help vulnerable people live safely and independently within the community.

18.2 In assessing support needs, Waterloo will require risk assessments, support plans and other relevant information from Social Services, Addaction, Probation, Community Mental Health Team, LCC Public Health team (formerly Supporting People Team) and other relevant agencies.

18.3 If this information is not provided by the agencies the Registration may be suspended/offer of accommodation withheld, and the agency and Applicant notified of the agency responsible.

18.4 Housing Providers reserve the right to refuse any bids from applicants for accommodation it deems unsuitable and where in its opinion, support plans are not sufficiently detailed to provide support to the applicant to ensure that their tenancy remains sustainable.

19 **CARERS**

19.1 Applicants with a disability or other need who require an additional bedroom to accommodate a carer are required to provide an approved and detailed Care Plan. Such Care Plans will need to be shared with all providers so that appropriate accommodation can be considered.

20 **RENT (AGRICULTURE) ACT 1976**

20.1 The Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 and the Housing Act 1988 give certain agriculture workers (including retired workers and successors) living in farm cottages, security of tenure. However, under these Acts a farmer may apply to the appropriate Local Authority to have the protected worker re-housed, if they need the cottage for another worker in the interests of efficient agriculture. To assist the authority in considering the farmer’s application the 1976 Act provides for an Agricultural Dwelling Housing Advisory Committee (ADHAC) to give advice on the case made by the applicant concerning the interests of efficient agriculture and regarding the urgency of the application.

If the ADHAC considers that the farmer requires the farm cottage for a new employee, ADHAC may recommend that the local authority award priority re-housing to the retiring farm worker. If urgent re-housing is recommended, the application will be placed into Band 1.

21 **DATING OF REGISTRATIONS**

21.1 The initial registration date of an application will be the date that the applicant registers their application details online. All relevant documentation to verify the details provided will be requested when an applicant is likely to be made an offer (i.e. their finishing position on a property shortlist is within the top 3) . The applicant will have 3 working days in which to provide relevant documentation.

21.2 Where an applicant notifies that they or a member of their household are affected by one or more of the following exceptional circumstances, they will be required to provide relevant documentation upon registration. All other
applicants will not be required to submit their details until they are successfully shortlisted for an offer of accommodation (see section 8):

- Homeless or facing homelessness (see section 13)
- Medical problems worsened by their current accommodation
- Are or have served in the Armed Forces
- Have been involved in ASB or have criminal convictions
- Moving to receive support
- Moving for education and/or training
- Suffering hardship or have a welfare need
- Current home not fit for habitation

Applicants will be placed within a band in date order.

- **new application**, the banding date will be the same as the applicant’s registration date.
- **change in circumstances which results in a higher band assessment**: the banding date will be the date the applicant provides satisfactory evidence of the change in circumstances.
- **change in circumstance which results in the banding remaining the same**: the banding date will not change
- **change in circumstances which result in a lower band assessment**: the banding date will revert to the original application date.
- **Refusal of three offers**: the banding date will be changed to the date of the last refusal. Applicants will be informed in writing and can request a review of this decision.

### 22 CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

22.1 All changes in Applicant’s circumstances must be updated on the applicants application through Homes Direct. Changes in circumstances that lead to re-banding will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the Applicant(s) advised accordingly.

### 23 SUPPORTING VULNERABLE APPLICANTS

23.1 Some vulnerable applicants may require help to ensure that they have the same opportunity to access the scheme. If an applicant is determined as vulnerable they may be offered support to access the scheme (as highlighted at section 6.1). In order to ensure that vulnerable applicants can express an interest in a property, the ‘auto bid’ function can be activated on their application within Homes Direct. This means that during each weekly bidding cycle an applicants details are matched to suitable available homes and a bid is automatically placed on their behalf through the system.

23.2 Applicants can also ring the contact centre at Waterloo where an advisor will be able to place a bid on their behalf.

23.3 Referrals for auto bid may come from a number of sources, although most would come from the following (however this is not exclusive):
- From the Registration process – where a badly completed application may indicate literacy or language problems or where the applicant
may indicate a particular disability such as hearing or sight impairment.

- Request from support worker or Housing Officer
- Self referral.
- From monitoring applicants who have not bid – where Waterloo identifies applicants who are not making bids for accommodation.

23.4 Examples of those who may require help are outlined in section 6.1:

24 THE BIDDING PROCESS

24.1 When the applicant(s) have registered on the scheme, they become a applicant(s) and will then be able to bid for up to 3 properties in each cycle, for which they are eligible.

24.2 ADVERTISEMENTS – Available properties are advertised in the following ways:

- **CBL Property Leaflet** – This is available on request and circulated to stakeholders
- **Website** – applicants are able to view available properties and apply ‘online’ for properties of their choice.
- **Computer Access** – details of where to access a computer and obtain support can be requested from Waterloo.
- **Telephone** – Applicants can telephone the Contact Centre at Waterloo where and an advisor will be able to place a bid on their behalf.

24.3 All available properties will normally be advertised on a weekly basis from midnight on a Wednesday through till midnight on a Sunday. Any bids received after the deadline will not be considered.

24.4 Occasionally it is necessary to withdraw a property/properties from an advert. Housing Providers reserve the right to withdraw properties without notice. Each advert contains an advisory note to this effect. This may be due to the notice on the property being withdrawn or for other reasons of good Housing Management practice.

24.5 PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS – Properties advertised using the above methods will have (where possible) a photograph of the property and a full description. This normally includes:

- Type of property
- Number of bedrooms
- Location of property
- Any adaptations (e.g. disabled facilities etc)
- Services provided (e.g. warden, caretaker, cleaning)
- Heating type
- Rent charged/service charges
- Whether it has a garden
- Amenities in the area
- Details if pets are permitted

24.6 Adverts also give information on who will be eligible to bid for the property including household size. For example if the property is a sheltered housing unit
the advert may state that only applicants above a certain age or those with assessed support needs will be eligible to apply. Those properties that have a local connection criteria will be appropriately detailed to indicate who is eligible to bid.

24.7 BIDDING FOR A PROPERTY – Where a Applicant meets the bidding criteria they may bid for that property within the deadline given. Applicants may use any of the following methods to make a bid:

- Via the contact centre at Waterloo on 0800 435016
- Through the Homes Direct website
- By email to homesdirect@Waterloo.org.uk
- Via the autobid function (where no action by the applicant is necessary)

24.8 DETERMINING PRIORITIES BETWEEN APPLICANTS WITH A SIMILAR LEVEL OF HOUSING NEED - Where two or more applicants with similar housing needs (i.e. within the same band) bid for a property, priority will be awarded to the applicant who has been waiting in the relevant band the longest and has a connection to the location of the property as follows:

- Local Connection - applicants with a connection to the location of the advertised property (i.e. town or village) will normally be prioritised over applicants without a local connection. A local connection is usually created through living or working in the location of the property or needing to move near to close family such as mum, dad, brother or sister for support.

24.9 PROPERTIES LET OUTSIDE THE SCHEME - The majority of available properties will be advertised through Homes Direct. However, there are circumstances where a property may be let outside of the scheme through a direct letting. Examples of this are, where:

- a Housing Provider has been requested to help ELDC in their duty to accommodate statutorily homeless households
- a Housing Provider has to temporarily decant (move) a tenant whilst major works are carried out at their current property
- A property is required for use as supported accommodation by ELDC
- a Housing Provider is carrying out major refurbishment works leading to the demolition of property and a tenant has to be housed in alternative accommodation
- High Level Supported accommodation, such as Extra Care Schemes
- a Housing Provider carries out a Management Transfer in exceptional cases only
- a property is required to provide accommodation for a staff member such as Scheme Managers of sheltered schemes.
- for reasons of good Housing Management practice.

Such properties will be identified by the relevant Lettings Manager at Waterloo and not made available for advertising.
Housing Providers will make appropriate arrangements for the housing of such tenants into suitable accommodation without their requirement to bid for any available properties.

Extra Care schemes are not let through Homes Direct and have separate Housing Registers. Schemes exist in Louth, Skegness (Waterloo) and Sutton on Sea (Anchor Housing). These properties are let by a Lettings Panel selecting the most suitable applicant from a list.

Where a vacant Waterloo property has not been able to be let in accordance with this Policy, and has been void for 4 weeks and/or has been refused 5 times, the property will be advertised through other methods, which may include through other schemes operating within Homes Direct. In cases where a property is determined as being in extremely low demand, this process shall be implemented at 2 weeks.

Any suitable applicants found via alternative schemes must meet the criteria for the vacant property before an offer can be made.

Where a property has been unable to be let through alternative schemes a direct list will be drawn from the Housing Register or the property will be advertised locally and offered to an applicant meeting the eligibility criteria. The property may also be advertised through Immediately Available Homes on Homes Direct.

24.10 VERIFICATION PROCESS

Contact shall be made with applicants who are actively bidding and their finishing positions on property shortlists are within the top 3. This will be to verify the details of their application and to ensure that they are ‘tenant ready’. The applicants Band award shall be verified and any further information required, such as existing landlord references shall be requested. Applicants will be required to provide information within 3 days. If the banding is incorrect, then Waterloo will review the application to ensure the applicant is eligible to remain on the housing register and award the correct banding.

Those with an unsatisfactory written reference from a current or previous landlord where there has been a serious breach of tenancy will not normally be offered accommodation. Each case is considered individually and applicants will be advised of what is required of them in order to be re-considered for an offer at a future point in time.

24.11 OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION AND TYPE OF TENANCY – At the close of the bidding process a list will be produced in priority and date order, and where required (on certain properties) highlighting applicants with a local connection or in employment. The housing provider will contact the first suitable applicant (taking into account sections 18 Housing Support and 30 Managing Risks) to establish that the property being considered is suitable in meeting the households needs.

24.12 Once it is established that the property to be offered is suitable the Housing Provider will carry out a full telephone interview. In making this decision, the housing provider will consider a range of factors including family make-up, financial, health, isolation, safeguarding, support needs, previous tenancy and criminal history.
If it has not been possible to contact that applicant by 12 noon the next working day the next suitable applicant will be contacted. The housing provider will check that the applicant is still in housing need.

Once an application has been approved, arrangements will be made for an accompanied viewing to take place followed by a sign-up which includes the applicant(s) signing the relevant tenancy agreement.

24.13 There is a right of appeal against any decision not to make an offer and this is detailed in the Waterloo Lettings Policy.

24.14 If the applicant’s circumstances have changed the bid may be overlooked.

24.15 Housing Providers always make formal offers of accommodation in writing to successful bidders. However, to ensure that homes are let as quickly as possible, verbal offers may be made prior to a written offer. The type of tenancy offered by Waterloo may be a Starter, Assured, or an Assured Shorthold fixed term depending on the circumstances of the let. The type of tenancy to be issued will be confirmed at the point of offer. Housing Providers may also operate two different rent levels; either a social rent or an Affordable Rent (where the rent level is set at 80% of the market rent level for the local housing allowance area). Those applicants who accept a tenancy set at an affordable rent will be issued a fixed term tenancy with Waterloo. Other Housing Providers will operate their own internal Policies around rent levels and you should refer to their website for details.

24.16 If the property is refused the next suitable applicant on the list will be contacted until the list is exhausted. At that point the property may be re-advertised.

24.17 **WITHDRAWING OFFERS** – There may be occasions where housing providers have cause to withdraw an offer on a property. This may be due to information coming to light about an applicant’s circumstances that affect their entitlement either their level of need, priority or other factors.

24.18 **REFUSALS / NON BIDDING** – If an applicant refuses 3 offers, (unless homeless, see section 13), they will be contacted regarding their housing requirements to ensure they understand the system and to offer support and assistance if required.

24.19 An applicant who refuses 3 offers for unsatisfactory reasons will be penalised in the form of having the band effective date changed to the date of last refusal.

24.20 All applicants in Band 1 who have not placed a bid during a 6 month period will be monitored to establish if any suitable properties have been advertised during the period. If eligible properties have been advertised the Applicant may be interviewed to establish why they did not bid, and their Registration will be reassessed.

24.21 All other applicants who have not placed a bid during a 12 month period will be sent a review letter asking if they still wish to remain on the register. Applicants who fail to respond to this letter within 28 days will be removed from the register.
24.22 **FEEDBACK** – An important part of the Scheme is the need to give applicants feedback on allocated properties. This will help applicants make an informed evaluation of their housing options. Feedback information will include:

- Property size and type
- Property location
- Banding of the successful Applicant
- Number of bids received
- Band effective date of successful Applicant

24.23 This feedback will be made available on the website and in the property magazine. No information that might identify an individual applicant will be published.

**25 PROPERTY TYPES AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

25.1 The Policy covers the letting of a range of property types throughout the area. These properties range from bed-sitting rooms to six bedroom houses. All properties will be advertised, stating who can bid for them.

25.2 Housing Providers always endeavour to make the best possible use of their stock in terms of size and suitability when setting the criteria for eligibility. For example, ground floor flats may be reserved for people with a disability. Housing Providers may also choose to exercise some discretion and invite bids from couples with 1 child for a 3 bed house if, for example, a particular village or area only has 3 bed houses.

25.3 Housing Providers can amend the bid criteria of previously advertised properties to widen the eligibility and enable successful bids to be made.

25.4 Housing Providers will generally let in accordance with the social size criteria, introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. (Specific details will be shown on the property advert). The rules allow 1 bedroom for

- Every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- Any other adults aged 16 or over
- Any 2 children of the same sex aged under 16*
- Any 2 children aged under 10*
- Any other child (other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere)*
- Children who can’t share a bedroom because of a disability or medical condition
- A carer (or team of carers) providing overnight care

One spare bedroom is allowed for

- An approved foster carer who is between placements, but only for up to 52 weeks from the end of the last placement
- A newly approved foster carer for up to 52 weeks from the date of approval if no child is placed with them during that time.

Rooms used by students and members of the armed or reserve forces will not be counted as ‘spare’ if they’re away and intend to return home.
* If an applicant shares the care of a child with the child’s other parent, the child will be treated as living with the parent who provides the child’s main home. If the child spends equal amounts of time with both parents, they will be treated as living with the parent who claims Child Benefit for them. This may mean that the applicant won’t be allowed a bedroom for the child. The housing provider might be lenient if there is low demand for the type of property requested from applicant who meet the property requirements and the applicant can provide evidence they can afford the rent payments.

* Unborn babies will be considered on receipt of the MATB1 certificate which is normally issued at about 20 weeks.

24.5 Warden supported accommodation is prioritised for applicants who need the support of a warden. Applicants might be considered without such a need but would not be entitled to housing benefit to assist with the additional charges. Applicants who need a warden may be considered for non warden accommodation if they are able to provide their own care and support such as through personalised budgets.

24.6 Adapted properties are prioritised for applicants who need the use of adaptations such as a level floor shower due to a disability. Generally disabled applicants will not be allowed to bid for non adapted properties but exceptions might be made by the housing provider if there are minimal adapted properties within the applicant’s area of choice. The applicant would need to be able to evidence to the housing provider’s satisfaction that they can get the property adapted to meet their needs. Some housing providers will require the applicant to sign a disclaimer and might not allow the applicant to apply for a transfer for 6 months.

25.7 Within East Lindsey there is a proportion of social housing properties that have ‘small’ bedrooms (i.e. less than 6.5 m²). When allocating such units, housing providers will only usually consider a household where there is a child aged 5 or below (at the point of allocation) to occupy the ‘small’ room.

25.8 In some circumstances a second living room in a property may be considered for use as a bedroom providing certain criteria are met.

25.9 Any local letting criteria will be specified on the advert.

26 LOCAL CONNECTION

26.1 To be considered for registration (see section 7.7) an applicant must have a connection to Lincolnshire as follows:

- Residence in Lincolnshire (*1) for the last 6 months; or
- Previous Residence within Lincolnshire (*1) for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years; or
- Born in Lincolnshire
- Permanent Employment (*2); or
- A need to move to receive support (*3) and this support cannot be provided within the current location; or
- A full homelessness duty has been accepted by a Lincolnshire Housing Authority
(*1) Lincolnshire is considered to be the districts of East Lindsey, Boston, Lincoln, North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey.

Applicants from permanent and seasonal caravan sites can be considered once they have been resident in Lincolnshire for over 6 months as their main residence. If it is their main residence, then an assessment of whether they worsened their circumstances by moving to the caravan will take place. Applicants who move from a secure situation such as a council tenancy or private rented property are likely to have worsened their circumstances unless it can be proven that they had to move for example due to domestic abuse or notice to quit.

(*2) Temporary and seasonal work is not included. The applicant must also be working a minimum of 16 hours per week.

(*3) An applicant must evidence a need to move rather than a wish to move plus evidence the need cannot be met in their current location. Below is not an exhaustive list but provides some examples of why an applicant needs to move.

- Child/Children with special needs and support is needed to enable normal daily living
- Applicant or child suffering from severe illness and support is needed to enable normal daily living
- Team around Child or similar recommendation
- MARAC recommendation

The following are examples of where an application may be refused because support can be provided in current location:

- Have a partner who is able to offer support
- Have close relatives or friends within a 10 mile radius who are able to offer support
- Other sufficient support networks i.e. public or charitable sectors i.e housing support, social worker, homestart can provide the support
- Financial ability to buy in support i.e personal budgets or sufficient savings
- Social tenant with reasonable prospects of getting a mutual exchange within a 10 mile radius of support networks

26.2 Where there are local connection restrictions relating to a property, these will be detailed on the property advert. They will vary depending upon the Provider and Local Authority restrictions. Any applicant can bid, but in the first instance preference will be given to applicants who have a local connection to the town, village or district as stated in the advert. Applicants will be ordered according to the strength of their local connection, followed by Band and then Band Effective Date.

To be considered as having a local connection to an area one of the following must normally apply:

The applicant must:

- Have been born in the town or village
- Currently reside in that town, village for a stated period of time.
• Have previously resided in that town, village or district for a continuous stated period.
• Have permanent employment in that town, village or district for a given number of hours per week for a continuous stated period.
• Need to reside in that town, village or district to give/receive support to/from someone who has resided in the district for a stated period of time.

If none of the above apply, the property will be let to the applicant who has been registered within the relevant housing need band the longest.

Proof will be required in all of the above cases. Confirmation will be sent with the Application Number which area the applicant has a local connection to.

This local connection definition does not apply to Local Lettings Policies or Section 106 agreement, see section 26.

Also see section 23.8, determining priorities between applicants.

27 LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES, PLANNING CONDITIONS AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

27.1 Local Lettings Policies are usually introduced to meet a particular local need and have an overall positive effect on estates. For example, if an estate had a high level of anti-social behaviour, applicants who bid for the advertised property would have a criminal check completed to ensure they were suitable for the property.

27.2 To be considered for a property within a Local Lettings scheme, the applicant would have to meet the criteria listed in the advert. Applicants would usually need to have a local connection to the town or village of the advertised property. Suitable applicants for tenancies will be selected from those who bid for the properties and invited for interview with the Housing Provider, the Council or Police. Selection will be based on the interview, employment, current accommodation and history of applicant.

27.3 The only local lettings scheme in East Lindsey as at December 2014 is at Queens Estate, Wainfleet. Details will be placed on the property advert.

27.4 When new developments are advertised restrictions may have been set on the development by the Planning Department of the Local Authority, these can be planning conditions with letting restrictions or Section 106 agreements. These are legal agreements between local authorities and developers, which are linked to a planning permission. For example, the Planning Department may restrict a new development in a village by stating that only people with a local connection to that village can be housed in the available properties meaning local connection could take priority over housing need. In cases where restrictions have been placed on a development properties will be advertised appropriately.

28 DELIBERATELY WORSENED CIRCUMSTANCES

28.1 Applicants who are found to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to improve their prospects of receiving an offer of social
housing will not be eligible for inclusion onto the housing register for up to 2 years from the date of our decision.

Deliberate worsening of circumstances arises where the applicant or anyone in their household has given up accommodation that was suitable for their needs and where there was no requirement or obligation to do so.

For example, an applicant moves from a secure tenancy to an insecure tenancy and it can be evidenced that they did this deliberately (or against professional advice) in order to increase their banding.

28.2 Applicants who had deliberately worsened their housing circumstances, but have since resolved the situation will remain ineligible for inclusion onto the housing register for a minimum of 12 months. To resolve the situation, the applicant must obtain accommodation that would move their application into the band that they would have been in prior to deliberately worsening their circumstances.

At the end of the relevant period applicants can request reconsideration.

28.3 Where priority has been reduced, applicants will always be informed in writing stating the reasons.

Applicants will have the right to request a review of this decision and to request their banding is re-assessed if they consider they have resolved the situation.

29 **PLACING APPLICANTS INTO A DIFFERENT BAND**

29.1 In some cases, people have worsened their circumstances but they did not do so to deliberately improve their banding. In this situation, we may place the application in a different band than the circumstances call for. Reasons may include but not limited to the applicant or anyone in their household has within the past 12 months:

- abandoned a previous tenancy
- moved to new housing that is worse than their previous housing without good reason
- moved from an adapted to an un-adapted home
- sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without getting other housing first.

29.2 If we think that the applicant has made their housing circumstances worse, inclusion onto the housing register will be refused for 12 months from the date of our decision.

At the end of the 12 month period applicants can request re-assessment of their application. On re-assessment, the application will be placed into the appropriate band from the date the application was re-assessed.

29.3 Where priority has been reduced, applicants will always be informed in writing stating the reasons.
Applicants will have the right to request a review of this decision and to request their banding is re-assessed if they consider they have resolved the situation.

30  MANAGING RISKS

30.1 The primary aim of Housing Providers is to maintain balanced and stable communities which are safe, thriving and attractive places to live. In working towards this vision, housing providers recognise that all people have a right to a home that is more than just somewhere to live. However, there will always be people who are more difficult to integrate into mainstream housing. To manage risks to individuals and communities, a multi-agency approach must be taken. For example, securing accommodation for a high-risk ex-offender will be done in consultation and with the approval of the appropriate agencies. In order to achieve this there may be occasions when the Applicant(s) who has/have the greatest priority within the scheme may not be offered a particular property. In such cases they will be written to by the housing provider explaining the reasons why.

30.2 Where an applicant is subject to MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Agency), we will liaise with the MAPPA panel to ensure an appropriate housing solution to meet the needs of the applicant and the community as a whole. In such cases, the offer of any accommodation following a successful bid, will be directed and approved by relevant statutory agencies. For any case registered with MAPPA and Divisional High Risk Meetings, ELDC is the nominated point of contact and will take the lead on working with registered housing providers in the provision of suitable accommodation.

30.3 Where an applicant suffering domestic abuse is the subject of a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) housing providers will liaise with the appropriate agencies to ensure any accommodation offered is as suitable in terms of location and security. Where it is possible to identify perpetrators of domestic abuse, consideration of the victim will be given when providing them with accommodation as far as is practicable.

30.4 An integral part of managing risks is to ensure that appropriate support networks are in place and are regularly monitored and reviewed.

30.5 Any successful bid will be deferred if the relevant agencies have not provided a relevant Care Plan/Risk Assessment to manage the risk.

31  ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

31.1 Waterloo, East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council work within the partnership framework provided by the East Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership to address issues which relate to community safety and crime reduction. This encompasses a range of issues, which includes, but is not limited behaviours which fall under the definition of anti social behaviour as defined within the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Examples of such behaviour include domestic abuse, hate crime, drug use, physical violence and threats of violence and noise nuisance. Waterloo reserves the right to liaise with the ASB meetings or relevant partnership bodies when considering any exclusion or other issues which have an impact upon community safety.
32 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

32.1 The information given during the registration process is sensitive Personal Data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be collected, processed and kept by Waterloo for the relevant purpose(s) and in accordance with that Act. Applicants have the right to request a copy of the information held about them (there is a fee). For the purposes of Data Protection Act, East Lindsey District Council as the data controller.

32.2 Applicants have the right to request information regarding any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering their application to join the Scheme.

32.3 Applications with Waterloo are confidential and can only be accessed by the relevant Waterloo or ELDC Housing staff. Confidential information held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- Where the person(s) who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
- Where Waterloo or ELDC is required by law to make such disclosures

32.4 In order to maintain confidentiality, Applicants will be asked a number of ‘checking’ questions when they contact Waterloo by telephone before discussing their application. If Applicants wish another person (friend or family member) who is not a joint applicant to enquire about their application on their behalf, written permission will be required from the Applicant beforehand.

33 REQUESTING A REVIEW

33.1 Every Applicant has the right to request a review of:

- The band into which they have been placed or
- Any decisions taken in relation to their Registration
- The outcome of their support needs assessment e.g. sheltered housing, risk assessment

33.2 All requests for a review must:

- Be in writing, addressed to the Senior Homes Direct Officer, Waterloo Housing Group, 1700 Solihull Parkway, Birmingham Business Park, Solihull, B37 7YD
- Be received within 21 days from the date of the decision letter, from the applicant(s) or their representative, clearly stating the grounds on which the review is being sought and providing any supporting evidence. Verbal representation will be allowed in exceptional circumstances.
- Waterloo will review such requests and provide a written response within 56 days of receipt of the request setting out the reasons for the decision.

33.3 The outcome of a review will always be given in writing.
34 MONITORING

34.1 In order to ensure that the Scheme is achieving its aims of being as open and accessible as possible to all members of the community the following may be monitored:

- The number of applicants on the register by band each quarter
- The number of lettings in the financial year (cumulative) each quarter
  - By property type (and bedrooms)
  - Separate listings for general needs and sheltered housing
  - Whether Homeless, transfer or general
  - Whether restricted (i.e. eligibility criteria advertised)
  - Bids overlooked
  - Whether to out of area Applicant
  - How many allocations by banding
  - Properties let outside of the scheme

- Property Feedback for each allocation as follows weekly:
  - Address of property
  - Number of bedrooms
  - Type of property
  - General / Sheltered
  - Property band
  - Number of bids
  - Refusals
  - Successful applicant bid
  - Band effective date

- List of all properties let by the scheme for current financial year each quarter
- Refusals and number of complaints about the scheme each quarter
- Non bidders, customer satisfaction & performance against service standards annually
- The numbers accessing help to bid through the assisted list and the reasons for being on the assisted list each quarter.
- Monitoring will also take place to test equality of access and opportunity, and levels of satisfaction across:
  - All ethnic groups using the scheme
  - Applicants of the assisted list
Glossary of Terms

“Adequately Housed”  Living in a property that is suitable for your needs

“Appeals Procedure”  The procedure followed to make an appeal

“Applicant(s)”  A person or persons submitting an application for Registration and those accepted onto the housing register

“Application”  An application for Registration submitted on a Registration Form

“Banding Scheme”  How applicants are prioritised in the scheme

“Bid”  The process of applicants saying which property they would like to live in

“CBL”  Choice Based Lettings

“Feedback Procedure”  The procedure followed to make a complaint/compliment

“Household”  People who can be reasonably expected to live with you, e.g. children, dependent adults, carers

“Housing Related Debt”  Rechargeable repairs, current or former rent arrears, rent assistance or homeless prevention payments

“NFA”  You have no fixed accommodation

“Policy”  The Choice Based Lettings Policy

“Registration”  The method of applying for housing

“Registration Form”  The form which must be completed to apply for housing

“Repayment Agreement”  An agreement made by the applicant to repay any housing related debt

“Service Standards”  The service standards set out at Section 6

“Stakeholders”  Other agencies/organisation with an interest or involvement with the scheme

“Street Homeless”  Sleeping rough on the streets