

# Cabinet Meeting

## 23 March 2016

<b>Report title</b>	Increasing the availability of Council flats to young people and families	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Lesley Roberts, City Assets	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Mila Simpson Tel Email	Service Lead Housing Strategy 01902 554845 <a href="mailto:mila.simpson@wolverhampton.gov.uk">mila.simpson@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Strategic Executive Board Improving the City Housing Offer Board	11 February 2016 23 February 2016 24 February 2016

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposal to remove age designations across all flats in the City.
2. Approve the proposal to apply an age designation of 50 years plus to former sheltered flats set out in the report.
3. Approve the proposal for a small number of former sheltered properties to have the age designation permanently removed with additional priority given to tenants within the Council's housing Allocation Policy should they wish to move to an age designated property.
4. Approve the allocation of additional properties (studio flats or one bedroom flats) to the People Directorate for use by the Looked after Children Transitions Housing Support Service.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for the removal of age designations from a number of Council flats to improve accessibility to housing for those in housing need.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 This report brings together two key workstreams relating to the supply and need for Council housing.
- 2.2 The Council's housing stock plays a vital role in the city's housing market, accounting for nearly a quarter of all housing and supply's homes to those households most in housing need.
- 2.3 A proportion of the Council's flatted accommodation is reserved for people over a minimum age. This means it is not accessible to young people or households with children. These age designations are set out within the Council's Allocation Policy; the scheme for determining priorities, and the procedure to be followed, in allocating Council housing and property nominated from social landlords. It is good practice to regularly review allocation policies, with the most recent review focusing on age designated property, as endorsed by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The aim of this review was to increase the supply of housing for those in housing need, make best use of the Council's housing stock and to ensure equality of opportunity for those accessing Council housing.
- 2.4 Alongside this there has been a strategic review of supported accommodation for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds which has been carried out jointly by the Council's Children's Commissioning and the Looked after Children's (LAC) Transitions Team. This has recommended an increase in the number of Council properties (studio flats and one bedroomed flats) let to the People directorate to support the LAC Transition Team's housing support service in supporting young people leaving care. This empowers them to learn and develop the necessary skills to enable them to move onto independent living.
- 2.5 Removing age designations will give thousands of residents, in particular younger families with children who really need a decent home, much more opportunity to access housing. It also provides further opportunity for the Council to act as 'One Council' supporting the needs of specific client groups and service areas.

## **3.0 Current Position**

- 3.1 There is a significant level of housing need within the city with over 7,000 households on the Council's housing register however typically only 1,700 properties become available to let each year. The Council must look at all opportunities to increase the supply of housing, make the best use of its housing stock and support vulnerable residents.

## Review of Age Designations on Council Flats

- 3.2 There is significant demonstrable housing need emanating from young people as well as families with children. Currently neither of these groups are able to access 10% of the Council's housing stock that has an age designation applied to it. Age designated flats provide good quality family accommodation across the city, particularly in areas where there is a lack of affordable housing. Since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the 'removal of the spare room subsidy', commonly referred to as the "bedroom tax", there is a greater demand for two bedroom property in the city.
- 3.3 A working group including Housing Services, Legal Services and Wolverhampton Homes employees was established to undertake the review of age designation on flats, with the aim of establishing a policy that is based on a clear and proportionate rationale and achieving the objectives of increasing the amount of housing available to those in housing need to improve their chances of being housed; making best use of stock ensuring equality of opportunity and compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.4 Cabinet is being asked to remove age designations across all flats in the city, as 70% of them were set at age 25 years plus. This improves the scale and choice of available accommodation for residents.
- 3.5 Also a proportionate amount of housing should be reserved for older people. This entails the application of an age designation of 50 years to former sheltered properties that meet the justified objective of creating '*supportive and secure environment(s) that enables older people to continue to live independently and with people of a similar age, in an environment that supports communal interaction and helps to reduce the likelihood of social isolation*'.
- 3.6 There are a small number of former sheltered properties whose design means they are unable to meet the justification for an age designation as above. It is recommended that these tenants are given an additional priority within the Council's Allocation Policy should they wish to move to a property with an age designation when they become available to let. This will require an amendment to the Allocations Policy to include an additional need for those tenants wanting to move.
- 3.7 Affected tenants and their Councillors as well as a number of stakeholders have been consulted on the proposals. Feedback received focused mainly on the perceived increase in anti-social behaviour and inter-generational conflict that may result from the changes. Reassurance will be provided to tenants as Wolverhampton Homes have a number of processes in place to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour but also to quickly respond and address any issues if and when they arise. Further details are set out in Appendix D.
- 3.8 A number of appendices are attached to the report that set out the detail of the review. These include:
- Appendix A – A list of all properties and how they will be affected by the recommendations.

- Appendix B – A local lettings plan that sets out how age designations will be applied going forward.
- Appendix C – Changes to the Allocations Policy to give additional priority to tenants wanting to move.
- Appendix D – The consultation process and feedback received from tenants and their Councillors including pre decision scrutiny feedback from 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel.
- Appendix E – The communications plan for supporting tenants through the transition

### **Provision of properties for the Looked after Children Transition Team's Housing Support Service**

- 3.8 There are currently ten council-owned properties and five Private Sector Leased properties that are let to the People Directorate for use by LAC Transitions Team's Housing Support Service which provides housing related support to young people leaving care.
- 3.9 The corporate priority to reduce the number of LAC and to support young people on the edge of care has led to the increase in the number of vulnerable young people requiring similar housing provision. In line with this priority and to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources, there is a need to reduce the use of external, expensive placements and there is a strong business case for the expansion of the internal service.
- 3.10 Since the service commenced in 2013, 36 young people have accessed the LAC Transition Team's Housing Support Service and it has been evidenced that a high level of positive outcomes are achieved by the young people, with 85 % who have moved into independence still successfully maintaining their own tenancy with their landlord.
- 3.11 The business case to expand the service was presented to People Leadership Team on 22 February 2016 and approved.

### **4.0 Benefits**

- 4.1 Approval of the recommendations emanating from these workstreams will lead to a number of benefits to the Council and residents of the city in housing need:
- Increase in the supply of housing to those in housing need, in particular for children and young people, including those leaving care;
  - A policy on the use of Age Designations that is proportionate to need and has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in its development;
  - Expansion of the LAC Transition Team's Housing Support Service will significantly reduce use of the regional supported accommodation framework, the number of emergency placements and placement breakdowns.
  - Use of internal resources including the Councils' own stock as oppose to externally funded places represents significant savings to the Council. Costs to date to support a young person in one of the LAC Transitions Housing Support Service properties

equate to £232 per young person per week, compared to the average cost of an external placement of £1050 per week.

## **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1 The changes to age designations will increase the potential applicant base for council properties, which has the potential to reduce void loss due to the increased the likelihood of a property being let.
- 5.3 Rental income to the Housing Revenue Account will be unaffected by an increased use of properties for LAC transitions as rent will be paid from the General Fund LAC Transitions Team budget.  
[JB/14032016/U]

## **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 The occupation of Council properties used by the LAC Transitions Housing Support Service will involve the use of the Council's introductory and secure tenancy agreements. In cases where the care leaver is younger than the age of 18, a trust document will need to be entered into between the Council and the Service Director for Children and Young People on behalf of the care leaver. The LAC Transitions Housing Support Service will be responsible for the management of these tenancies. In many cases the care leaver will not be resident long enough to convert to a secure tenancy and the LAC Transitions team will work with the care leaver once they attain the age of 18 to assess their future housing options. The young person will agree to a set of conditions of residency. Legal advice will be sought throughout the process.
- 6.2 The removal of the age designations in places where there is no objective justification for keeping them in place serves to reduce inequality of access to the Council's housing stock. The new policy will for example, allow greater opportunity of chance for those with certain protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') who previously were at a disadvantage. The change in policy also accords with the Council's public sector equality duty as outlined in s149 of the Act in terms of advancing equality of opportunity. Legal advice shall be sought by Wolverhampton Homes and the TMOs on a regular basis in terms of lettings and tenancy management issues.  
[RP/08032016/Y]

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 The provision of additional properties to the Looked after Children's Transitions Team supports the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy for Looked after Children and demonstrates its commitment to furthering the life chances of every child and young person in its care; improve their outcomes, narrowing the gap between them and their peers, and providing effective support which enables them to reach their full potential.

- 7.2 Following a stage one Equality Analysis undertaken on age designations of flats, which flagged up issues that required further exploration, a full stage two Equalities Analysis was completed. This identified potential detrimental impacts on women and pregnancy and maternity.
- 7.3 In undertaking the review of age designations in flats due regard has been paid to the Equality Act 2010. This Act seeks to tackle unlawful discrimination against a person or group of people with a protected characteristic(s). An important part of the Act is the Public Sector Equality Duty, which plays a key role in ensuring that fairness is at the heart of public bodies' work and that public services meet the needs of different groups. It also requires public bodies to think about how they can eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for all protected groups.
- 7.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to think proactively about how they can ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to use and access public services. However, anti-age discrimination provisions are not extended to accommodation as referred to in paragraph 4.13 of the Equality Act. Part 4 of the Equality Act deals with accommodation and Section 32 makes it clear that Part 4 does not apply where the protected characteristic is age. This means that it is not unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age in the disposal and management of accommodation. This is because of the need to retain age-based housing such as foyer homelessness services for young people or sheltered housing for older people.
- 7.5 Due to the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council needs to demonstrate that it has given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations in respect of age for their housing functions. In light of 7.1 to 7.4 the potential detrimental impact the current policy has on women the Council could not objectively justify a policy that continues to apply age designations to the current extent and in the current way (i.e. weighted at a minimum age of 30 years). It could however identify a justifiable objective for a proportionate amount of housing to be reserved for older people within the Council's housing offer that creates an environment for older people who would like to live together to support communal interaction, reduce social isolation, in a supportive environment.

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

- 8.1 No environmental implications have been identified.

## **9.0 Human resources implications**

- 9.1 There are no additional human resources implications arising from the recommendations.
- 9.2 Implementation of an Age Designation local lettings plan will be undertaken within current resources from Housing Services and Wolverhampton Homes. This will include amendments to the Allocations Policy, Northgate system (The Council's housing management software), briefing of staff and communication of changes to tenants and applicants.

9.3 The expansion of the will be undertaken within current resources of the Looked after Children's (LAC) Transitions Team

#### **10.0 Corporate landlord implications**

10.1 There are no direct corporate landlord implications resulting from this report. The report deals exclusively with property available for letting within the Housing Revenue Account.

#### **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

11.1 IEDN Provision of properties for Looked After Children Transitions Housing Support Service 3 June 2014.

11.2 Allocations Policy Review, Cabinet, December 2014

11.3 Review of Age Designations on Council Flats, Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel, 11 February 2016

**Appendix A – Recommended changes to age designated flats**

**Recommendation: Age designation removed from blocks**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Current Age Designation</b>
James Street	Bilston East	30 Plus
Lord Street	Bilston East	40 Plus
Broadmeadow Green	Bilston North	30 Plus
Fellows Road	Bilston North	30 Plus
Green Lanes, Stowlawn	Bilston North	30 Plus
Langdale Drive	Bilston North	30 Plus
Lawnside Green	Bilston North	30 Plus
Primrose Avenue	Bushbury North	30 Plus
Cannock Road	Bushbury South and Low Hill	50 Plus
First Avenue	Bushbury South and Low Hill	30 Plus
Arthur Greenwood Court	Ettingshall	25 Plus
Boydon Close	Ettingshall	30 Plus
Frost Street	Ettingshall	30 Plus
Princess Court	Fallings Park	40 Plus
Queens Court	Fallings Park	40 Plus
Dale Street	Graiseley	30 Plus
Graiseley Street	Graiseley	30 Plus
Lord Street	Graiseley	40 Plus
Merridale Court	Graiseley	40 Plus
Oak Street	Graiseley	40 Plus
Russell Court	Graiseley	30 Plus
St Philips Grove	Graiseley	30 Plus
Brockfield House	Heath Town	30 Plus
Campion House	Heath Town	30 Plus
Eversley Grove	Heath Town	40 Plus
Lincoln Street	Heath Town	30 Plus
Longfield House	Heath Town	30 Plus
Red Oak House	Heath Town	30 Plus
Wednesfield Road	Heath Town	30 Plus
William Bentley Court	Heath Town	30 Plus
Highfield Court	Merry Hill	30 Plus
St Josephs Court	Merry Hill	30 Plus
Warstones Drive	Merry Hill	30 Plus
Barley Close	Oxley	40 Plus
Bracken Close	Oxley	40 Plus

<b>Block</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Current Age Designation</b>
Ash Street	Park	40 Plus
Connaught House	Park	30 Plus
Vauxhall House	Park	30 Plus
Ettingshall Road	Spring Vale	50 Plus
Fozdar Crescent	Spring Vale	50 Plus
Birch Court	St Peter's	30 Plus
Dinsdale Walk	St Peter's	30 Plus
Flaxton Walk	St Peter's	30 Plus
Weston Court	St Peter's	30 Plus
Whitmore House	St Peter's	30 Plus
Field Head Place	Tettenhall Regis	30 Plus
Lower Street	Tettenhall Regis	40 Plus
Regis Road	Tettenhall Regis	30 Plus
Brantley Avenue	Tettenhall Wightwick	30 Plus
Bromfield Court	Tettenhall Wightwick	30 Plus
Castlecroft Road	Tettenhall Wightwick	30 Plus
Limehurst Avenue	Tettenhall Wightwick	30 Plus
Sandy Hollow	Tettenhall Wightwick	55 Plus
Adey Road	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Ferguson Street	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Griffiths Drive	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Higgs Road	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Prestwood Road	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Stanley Close	Wednesfield North	30 Plus
Gregory Court	Wednesfield South	30 Plus
Grosvenor Court	Wednesfield South	50 Plus
Hart Road	Wednesfield South	30 Plus

**Recommendation: Age Designation Applied at age 50 – No change**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Current Age Designation</b>
Hugh Gaitskell Court	Bilston North	50 Plus
Hayling Grove	Blakenhall	60 Plus
Chetton Green (Harrowby)	Bushbury North	50 Plus
Masefield Road	Fallings Park	50 Plus
Redcotts Close	Fallings Park	50 Plus
Graiseley Court	Graiseley	60 Plus
Lincoln House	Heath Town	50 Plus
Tremont House	Heath Town	50 Plus

Shaw Road	Spring Vale	50 Plus
Tong Court	St Peter's	50 Plus
The Acres	Tettenhall Regis	50 Plus
The Poynings	Tettenhall Regis	60 Plus
Grosvenor Court	Wednesfield South	50 Plus

**Recommendation: Age Designation Removed with additional priority in the Allocations Policy for a move to an age designated property**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Current Age Designation</b>
Johnson Street	Blakenhall	50 Plus
The Hollows	Ettingshall	50 Plus
Albert Road (Park View Mews)	Park	60 Plus

## **Appendix B - Designated Properties Local Lettings Plan**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council is required by Part VI Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for determining priorities, and the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation both to first time applicants and transferring tenants including nominations to Registered Providers (Housing Associations). This is set out within the Allocations Policy.
- 1.2 The aim of the Allocations Policy, whilst meeting legislative requirements, is to make best use of the limited supply of social and affordable housing becoming vacant each year by providing a simple, transparent priority system based on clear criteria which determines an applicant's place within the allocations scheme.
- 1.3 The policy recognises that from time to time certain housing stock would benefit from a local lettings plan where the needs are not met by way of the main Allocations Policy.
- 1.4 The Allocations Policy sets out that specific property can be designated by age in certain circumstances, the detail of which is to be set out within a local lettings plan.

### **2.0 Objective**

- 2.1 This local lettings plan sets out how the Council has varied the Allocations Policy to enable a proportionate amount of Council flats to be reserved for older households.
- 2.2 The aim of the local lettings plan is to:

Provide supportive and secure environment(s) that enables older people to continue to live independently and with people of a similar age, in an environment that supports communal interaction and helps to reduce the likelihood of social isolation.

### **3.0 Designation**

- 3.1 Properties covered by this local lettings plan are designated at age 50 years plus.
- 3.2 A one year tolerance is acceptable. Applicants who will be 50 within a year of when a bid is placed on a property are eligible to bid.
- 3.3 If it is a joint application both of the applicants will need to meet the age designation.
- 3.4 Any further members of the household will need to meet the age designation.

### **4.0 Application of the local lettings plan**

- 4.1 Designated properties will be advertised with the age requirement.
- 4.2 The shortlist of applicants will be made up of eligible households that meet the age requirement.

- 4.3 If no eligible applicants bid for it then the property will need to be re-advertised.
- 4.4 Properties will then be allocated in accordance with the Allocations Policy as set out in 'Selection of offers'.
- 4.5 All other clauses within the Allocations Policy apply.

## **5.0 Properties**

- 5.1 This local lettings plan extends only to flats. The specific properties that are designated by age and to be let in accordance with this local lettings plan are set out at appendix 1.

## **6.0 Monitoring and review**

- 6.1 The impact and effectiveness of the local lettings plan will be under periodic review. This will include but is not limited to monitoring lettings, demand, void loss and equality implications.
- 6.2 Following a review the Council reserves the right to amend this local lettings plan and/or the designated properties within to ensure but not limited to:
  - that designated properties continue to meet the aims of the local lettings plan
  - that the Council is able to react to changes in supply and demand
  - that the Council is able to respond to Government policy or other external drivers
- 6.3 This local lettings plan will initially be reviewed six months post implementation.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

- 7.1 This local lettings policy is as a result of a review undertaken on age designated property within the Allocations Policy, which concluded in March 2016. As part of this process an equality analysis was undertaken on the previous policy and the recommendations of the review, including this local lettings plan which was a key recommendation of the review.

**Appendix 1**  
**Flatted properties designated at age 50 years plus**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Address</b>
Harrowby Court	Chetton Green Brinsford Road Wolverhampton, WV10 6ER
Patshull Court	Block C Chetton Green Brinsford Road Wolverhampton, WV10 6RL
Graiseley Court	Hallet Drive Graiseley Wolverhampton, WV3 0NT
Grosvenor Court	Lakefield Road Wednesfield Wolverhampton, WV11 3RD
Hayling Grove	Tudor Crescent Penn Wolverhampton, WV2 4OE
Hugh Gaitskell Court	Park View Road Stowlawn, Bilston Wolverhampton, WV14 6HE
Lincoln House	Tremont Street Heath Town Wolverhampton, WV10 0JB
Masefield Road Odd properties 55 to 113	Masefield Road The Scotlands Wolverhampton, WV10 8SB
Redcotts Close Properties 1 to 74	Redcotts Close The Scotlands Wolverhampton, WV1 8RF
Shaw Road Odd properties 17 to 31	Shaw Road Woodcross Wolverhampton WV14 9PU
The Acres Properties 1 to 16	Brantley Avenue Finchfield Wolverhampton, WV3 9AR
The Poynings Properties 1 to 20	Regis Road Tettenhall Wolverhampton, WV6 8QN
Tong Court	Boscobel Crescent Boscobel Wolverhampton, WV1 1QQ
Tremont House	Tremont Street Heath Town Wolverhampton, WV10 0JD

## Appendix C – Amendments to the Allocations Policy

To ensure tenants of former sheltered properties where the age designation is being removed are given priority within the Allocations Policy to move to an age designated property the following clause to be added for a year, expiring April 2017:

### 12. Social/welfare grounds

12.1 Social/Welfare grounds are factors affecting a person's situation where a move would help in resolving that particular circumstance. Social need awards will be reviewed after 3 months or on refusal of a suitable offer of accommodation.

#### Circumstances applicable to a Band 1 award

- City of Wolverhampton Council tenants wanting to move to an age designation block reserved for older households who are currently living in a flat that was a former sheltered scheme and the age designation was removed in April 2016.

In accordance with the outcome of the review, section 32 of the Allocations Policy, 'Designated Properties' to be updated to reflect the new policy, which is set out in the 'Designated Properties Local Lettings Plan' (Appendix B)

### 32. Designated Properties

32.1 Particular blocks of flats are designated for older households as set out within the 'Designated Properties Local Lettings Plan', which is an addendum to the Allocations Policy. The local lettings plan contains the detail on the properties that are age designated, eligibility and the process for selection of offers on these properties.

32.2 Periodic reviews of designations may be undertaken. This can result in changes being made to the local lettings plan to ensure that age designations are fit for purpose and meet their original aim as well as allowing the Council to react to changes in supply and demand.

32.3 For further detail please refer to the 'Designated Properties Local Lettings Plan'.

## **Appendix D**

### **Consultation on the review of age designations on flats**

Recommendations have been shared with affected tenants, their Councillors, TMOs and Wolverhampton Federation and Tenants Association offering the opportunity to provide feedback to be considered alongside this report. A limited response has been received but most notably concerns were expressed around a potential increase in anti-social behaviour and clashes of lifestyle.

The following reassurances can be provided:

- New applicants to the housing register are subject to a number of checks. Where there is evidence of previous ASB using the Allocations Policy the applicant can be placed within Band 4 Lesser Preference, giving them the lowest priority for housing.
- Where the behaviour is serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant they can be excluded from the housing register and so unable to bid for housing.
- Robust pre tenancy work is undertaken with new tenants, which sets out their responsibilities and the consequences of ASB, which can result in eviction.
- The integration of younger people and families into blocks will be a slow process dependent on flats becoming available and households being successful in their bids.
- Estate Managers are alerted to the potential changes and are geared up to quickly address any issues as and when they arise through exiting Wolverhampton Homes processes.
- Based on statistics and discussions with the Anti Social Behaviour Manager a significant increase in ASB is not anticipated.
- If there is an increase the ASB team will act quickly to respond and will undertake targeted, multi-agency, preventative work.
- New tenants have an introductory tenancy for 12 months. Any breaches are dealt with and in cases of persistent or serious ASB the tenant will be evicted.
- There is a tenancy sustainment service which helps to identify and resolve any issues;
- The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has made things simpler and faster for agencies when dealing with ASB.
- As the policy is implemented it will be monitored based on a range of information including feedback from Estate Managers, the ASB Manager, management information and periodic reviews including equality analysis.

A communications plan has been developed which ensures that affected tenants will be clear on the mechanisms for reporting issues and seeking support if it should occur (Appendix E).

A report of the review of age designations on flats was presented at Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The panel agreed to receive details of interim public communication plan to tenants covering the period from publication to the date it will be considered by Cabinet. The panel comments on the report to be included as an appendix to the report presented to Cabinet. The majority of the panel accepted the recommendations. Councillors Haynes and Wynne wanted it recorded that they rejected the proposal to remove age discrimination across those properties affected.

## Appendix E – Communications Plan

Date	Activity	Lead	Aim
March	WFTA Board Meeting	Housing Strategy	Respond to any outstanding queries relating to the age designation recommendations.
Fri 11 March or earlier	Circulate updated business rules to City Direct, Homes in the City and front line Housing Officers	Housing Strategy	To ensure customer service officers are fully briefed on key issues so they can provide appropriate response to customers and provide clear guidance on reporting any issues or seeking additional support
Mon 14 March	Existing FAQ's (updated) and contact details go live on Wolverhampton Homes website	Housing Strategy/ Wolverhampton Homes	<p>An updated FAQ will provide clear messages on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the changes to provide residents with as much choice as possible when choosing a suitable home for themselves and their families.</li> <li>• Reassurance on how ASB will be addressed should it arise – Wolverhampton Homes has a zero tolerance approach to ASB from application to secure tenancy</li> <li>• Clear contact details to clarify any issues on changes to age designations for both City Direct and Homes in the City</li> <li>• Clear contact details to report issues relating to ASB or neighbour conflict</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Mon 14 March	News release issued through normal communication channels. Include link to FAQ's on Wolverhampton Homes website.	Comms	City of Wolverhampton Council to issue a news release through the usual channels reiterating key messages above.
Wed 23 March	Report goes to Cabinet	Housing Strategy	

Thursday 24 March	Bespoke letters issued to 2,500 affected tenants and leaseholders with separate FAQ's (repurposed if necessary following cabinet approval).	Housing Strategy	Letter to set out the decision that is made at Cabinet and how each tenants block will be affected if approved. Provide contact details for Estate Management contact details for help with individual housing matters or concerns Provide contact details for reporting issues of ASB or other issues arising
Thurs 24 March	Bespoke email to all councillors with FAQ's attached	Housing Strategy	Circulate email to Councillors to notify them of the changes if approved. Email to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce zero tolerance - pre-tenancy workshops for new tenants</li> <li>• Estate Management contact details for help with individual housing matters or concerns.</li> <li>• Housing Strategy contact details for further enquiries</li> </ul>
W/C 28 March	Article on Homes in the City highlighting the additional stock available for letting	Wolverhampton Homes	Publish article alerting applicants to the additional properties that may be showing up on HitC within their eligibility