



**To the Chairperson and Each Member of the
Housing & Social Inclusion Strategic Policy Committee**

Item 4 of the SPC Meeting 22nd February 2018

Proposed Amendments to Scheme of Allocations 2017

I refer to the Scheme of Letting Priorities / Allocations Scheme adopted by the elected members of Galway City Council on the 10th July 2017 and wish to outline the following two proposed amendments to be considered by the SPC in advance of consideration by full Council as a reserved function.

Amalgamate Section 6.3 and 6.4 into revised Section 6.3

In the current SLP Section 6.3 states:

Galway City Council will refuse to accept an application for social housing support from persons who voluntarily surrendered, within the previous two year, a Local Authority, Approved Housing Body or Rental Accommodation Scheme tenancy in accordance with Section 20 (8) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provision) Act, 2009.

The wording of this section is in contravention of the Housing Acts as every applicant is entitled to a housing assessment under Section 20(2) of the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2009 in order to determine that household's eligibility, and need for, social housing support for the purposes of determining; whether the household is qualified for such support and the most appropriate form of any such support.

The housing authority may take into account social housing support previously provided by any housing authority to the household in making a determination as to the most appropriate form of social housing support for that household. The reference to Section 20 (8) above is also inaccurate.

It is proposed, therefore, to amalgamate reference to surrender of a local authority or approved housing body property into a revised Section 6.3 and to remove the reference to 'refusing to accept' an application.

Proposed amended Section 6.3:

6.3 Galway City Council will not allocate a dwelling to a qualified household where a household member;

(a) damaged a dwelling previously provided by any housing authority or approved housing body and neither repaired the dwelling nor paid for the cost of repairing the dwelling unless and until the cost of repairing the dwelling has been paid to the housing authority or approved housing body concerned or the household member has entered into an arrangement with the housing authority or approved housing body concerned for the payment of such moneys, as the case may be;

(b) was previously a tenant of a dwelling provided by a housing authority or approved housing body and incurred arrears of rent for an accumulated period of 12 weeks or more in any period of 3 years as such tenant, which arrears have not been paid and the household member concerned has not entered into an arrangement with the housing authority or approved housing body for the payment of such moneys;

(c) voluntarily surrendered, within the previous two years, a local authority, approved housing body or Rental Accommodation Scheme tenancy, for a minimum period of two years.

New Section – Elderly Property Owners / Vacant Homes

This Amendment is considered beneficial in order to address a number of situations that have arisen where elderly property owners are unable to access the HWL or be granted PtR on the basis of home ownership. The amendment will only be utilised where the applicant's property is run down and uninhabitable and the owner may have to vacate or face homelessness.

It is also considered beneficial to facilitate Council access to properties that may be at risk of long-term vacancy / dilapidation due to the inability of the owner to affect the necessary repairs. Where the owner agrees to dispose of the property the Council can ensure it does not fall into dilapidation. It also facilitates the applicant into a more sustainable accommodation type and tenure. The proposed amendment below is in place and in use in other local authorities.

Section 13: Elderly Property Owners / Vacant Homes:

Housing applications and/or applications for permission to reside from elderly persons who are owners of sub-standard, unsuitable private dwellings and who are unable to improve their standard of accommodation from within their own resources, may be considered for tenure of a local authority or Approved Housing Body house subject to the following conditions:

- a) The Council is given the option to purchase their existing dwelling at a cost of 50% of the market value.
- b) If the Council do not wish to acquire the dwelling, the dwelling will be sold on the open market by the applicant and 50% of the sale proceeds will be paid to the Council.

Both parties will be required to obtain their own separate independent valuations in relation to option (a) above. The applicant will nominate selling agent in relation to option (b). The applicant will also be required to obtain independent legal advice before entering into any such agreement with the Council.