



Approved: 11 February 2021

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Background The Hurunui District Council owns and tenants residential units for social housing.

Purpose The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council intends to manage Council-owned social housing in order to provide a low-cost housing option for older persons or those with mobility, mental health or disability issues in particular those, who due to their personal circumstances, may be unable to afford housing at market rates, to allow them to stay living within the district.

Principles The following principles apply to the management of social housing:

- Tenancy of social housing will give priority to people who, due to their age or physical ability and their personal circumstances, may be unable to afford housing at market rates, with preference given to people that have a connection with the district.
- Rent levels will be set to provide below market rates, taking into account affordability, while also ensuring they are sufficient to meet the costs of maintaining units.
- Units will be maintained to a suitable standard.
- The Council will comply with Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2010.

Scope This Policy applies to the following social housing stock owned by the Council:

- 5 Church Street Amberley - 4 double and 5 single units
- 5 Pound Street Amberley - 1 double and 2 single units
- 35 Princes Street, Waikari - 5 single units
- 53 Conical Hill Road, Hanmer Springs - 4 single units
- 4 Seddon Street, Cheviot - 4 single units
- 5 Rolleston Street, Cheviot - 4 single units
- 16 Buckley Street, Cheviot – 5 single units

Policies

1. PRIORITY APPLIED TO TENANTS

1.1. When assessing applications for tenants for social housing, Council officers will apply the following priorities:

Priority	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aged 65 years old and over, or - Adults who have been on the Supported Living Payment for 18 months or more, and unable to afford housing at market rates, or unable to easily access rental housing in their own right due to mobility, mental health or disability issues; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can demonstrate a housing need; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Have total assets of no more than \$25,000 (single) or \$30,000 (couple); and c. Gross income (excluding Superannuation or Supported Living Payments) is not more than the equivalent of 15 hours per week at minimum wage; and d. Have a connection with the district.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aged 60 years old and over; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can demonstrate a housing need; and b. Have total assets of no more than \$25,000 (single) or \$30,000 (couple); and c. Gross income (excluding Superannuation or Supported Living Payments) is not more than the equivalent of 15 hours per week at minimum wage; and d. Have a connection with the district.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As per Priority 1 or 2, but does not meet (d).
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aged 60 years old and over; or - Adults who have been on the Supported Living Payment for 18 months or more, and unable to afford housing at market rates, or unable to easily access rental housing in their own right due to mobility, mental health or disability issues; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have total assets of no more than \$100,000 (single) or \$150,000 (couple).
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any other person

1.2. For double units, where a single person and a couple are the same priority, preference will be given to the couple in the first instance.

2. DETERMINING HOUSING NEED AND CONNECTION WITH THE DISTRICT

2.1. The determination of whether a prospective tenant has a housing need will be made at the discretion of Council officers, taking into account (but not limited to), the following:

2.1.1. What alternate living arrangement are available to them;

2.1.2. The satisfactoriness of their current living arrangements; and

2.1.3. The urgency of their situation.

2.2. The determination of whether a prospective tenant has a connection with the district will be made at the discretion of Council officers, taking into account (but not limited to), the following:

2.2.1. Whether they have lived or worked in the district, for how long, and how recently; or

2.2.2. Whether they have family who live in the district.

3. CONDITIONS APPLYING TO PRIORITY 5 TENANCIES

- 3.1. A Priority 5 tenant shall only be considered when there are no other prospective tenants who meet the Priority 1, 2, 3 or 4 criteria.
- 3.2. A three-month Fixed Term tenancy will be used for Priority 5 tenants.
- 3.3. Where a new tenant who meets the Priority 1, 2, 3 or 4 criteria is identified, any Priority 5 tenant will be given notice to vacate.

4. TENANCY AGREEMENTS

- 4.1. Periodic Tenancy agreements shall apply to Priority 1 - 4 tenants.
- 4.2. When an existing tenant's circumstances have changed such that they no longer meet the Priority 1, 2, 3 or 4 criteria, and suitable applicants meeting the Priority 1, 2, 3 or 4 criteria are waiting to take up a tenancy, the Council will serve written notice to vacate the unit.

5. ANNUAL PRIORITY REVIEW OF TENANCY

- 5.1. An annual tenancy review will be conducted with each tenant to confirm the priority level of the tenant. The outcome of the review will be:
 - 5.1.1. If the tenant remains at the same priority level, their tenancy and current level of rental will be maintained;
 - 5.1.2. Where the tenant's circumstances have changed such that they are a different priority, the rental rates will be amended (if relevant) to reflect their current priority level, and if they remain Priority 1-4, their tenancy shall be maintained (clause 4.2 applied to those who do not remain Priority 1-4); and
- 5.2. Any existing tenant who experiences a change of financial or personal circumstances during the year, may request, through completion of the specified form, a review of their rent.

6. WAITING LIST

- 6.1. The Council may develop and maintain a waiting list of applicants who meet the criteria and are looking for housing.
- 6.2. Any person on the waiting list who experiences a change of financial or personal circumstances during the year, may request that the Council reviews their priority rating.

7. APPLICATION FORMS AND PRIVACY

- 7.1. Applications must be made using the application form, which is provided at Council offices and services centres, or available on the website.
 - 7.2. Applications must include any information specified in the application form.
 - 7.3. Where a couple wish to rent a social housing unit, both people are required to complete an application form.
 - 7.4. The Council will hold information pertaining to potential and existing tenants in separate files to those containing property information. Tenant information will be held securely, be
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accessed only by authorised Council officers and used for the purpose for which it was collected.

- 7.5. Tenant information will be made available on request to the person to whom the information relates, and where requested will be updated if incorrect or out-of-date.

8. RENTALS

- 8.1. Rental rates will be calculated as a percentage of estimated market rental, up to the following maximum amounts:

Priority	Amount
1, 2 and 3	40% less than estimated market rental
4	25% less than estimated market rental
5	Estimated market rental

- 8.2. The Council will carry out a rent review annually with any adjustments to rent effective from the first week in July of each year.
- 8.3. Rental rates for the current financial year will be specified in the Council's fees and charges.

9. UNIT MAINTENANCE, UPGRADES AND INSPECTIONS

- 9.1. The Council will maintain housing units to a suitable standard, taking into account the Council's legal obligations and the reasonable demands of the tenant.
- 9.2. Tenants are encouraged to maintain the gardens in the immediate vicinity of their unit. The Council shall ensure well-kept properties by organising lawn and garden care and hedge trimming where the resident does not carry out this work.
- 9.3. Property inspections will be carried out, at least annually, and in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement.
- 9.4. The Council will assess the condition of units between tenancies to identify and undertake any upgrades or maintenance work assessed as being appropriate.
- 9.5. The Council will consider any requests for upgrading from tenants on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the condition of the unit, the scope of works requested, the cost of any upgrades and the practicality of work being undertaken mid-tenancy.

10. TENANCY TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

10.1. Cars and Parking:

- 10.1.1. Where there are not enough carports for every unit, the Council will allocate carports to the tenant longest in residence who has a need for a car port.
- 10.1.2. The Council, on request, will place any new tenants on the waiting list for a carport.
- 10.1.3. The Council retains the right to remove non-road worthy or wrecked vehicles at the owner's expense.

10.2. Smoke free:

- 10.2.1. Smoking is not permitted inside any Council social housing unit, but is permitted outside the unit, including on verandas, balconies or decks, provided that this does
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not cause nuisance to any neighbour.

10.3. Pets:

- 10.3.1. No dogs will be permitted to be kept as pets by any tenant.
- 10.3.2. Cats, caged birds and other domestic pets will be allowed subject to specific approval being sought and given by Council, and included in the tenancy agreement.
- 10.3.3. Any damage caused by pets is the responsibility of the tenant.

11. VACATING UNITS

- 11.1. Notwithstanding the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2010, where a tenant vacates a unit without giving the required notice, the Council may choose not to seek any outstanding rent due for the notice period where the tenant has had to move suddenly due to ill health, is shifting to residential care, or has died.

12. FUTURE DEMAND

- 12.1. Before considering the construction or acquisition of additional social housing stock in future, the Council will undertake an assessment of housing needs in a specified area (or district-wide).
- 12.2. Where this assessment determines that existing social housing stock is inadequate or does not match the current or emerging needs, the Council will consider the following:
 - 12.2.1. Whether the location of any additional housing stock being considered match the assessed need, including: geographical location; proximity to services; accessibility; and the safety and well-being of the tenants; and
 - 1.1.1. The viability of selling some existing stock and using the proceeds to replace it with stock that would better match the current or future need; and
 - 1.1.2. Whether the additional housing stock is expected to generate sufficient revenue to cover the initial outlay and ongoing maintenance; and
 - 1.1.3. Whether the construction or acquisition falls within the Hurunui District Council's purpose (Section 10, Local Government Act 2002), or the has Council resolved to work outside of that specified purpose.

END OF POLICY