

Background

The Council's Allocations Policy sets out how the Council decide who is allocated properties that become empty and available to let, and on what basis this decision is made.

In 2019 our Allocation Policy underwent a comprehensive review as a result of several changes to legislation. When we introduced this new Policy it was agreed that we would review it regularly. The latest review of this Policy was carried out in 2022 to make sure that it was still working as we intended it to.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on all social landlords (including Stirling Council) to consult with the following groups of people when reviewing and considering changes to its Allocation Policy:

- Applicants on its housing list
- Tenants
- Registered Tenant Organisations
- Other persons and groups that the landlord sees fit.

The Act also states that after the consultation has taken place, social landlords must prepare and publish a report on the consultation.

This document is Stirling Council's report on the consultation that took place while reviewing our Allocations Policy in 2022.

Consultation Methods

To make sure that we complied with the law, and so that the views of applicants, tenants, tenants groups and elected members and other stakeholders were taken into account, we consulted with people in a variety of different ways. These are set out below. We also considered the consultation results from the Policy review carried out in 2019 when considering potential changes to the Allocation Policy.

Consultation Method	Target Group	Comments
Allocations Working Group	Registered Tenant Organisations	<p>A working group was set up with members of registered tenant organisations.</p> <p>The group examined the current Policy, researched good practice, looked at housing need and demand in the area and the views of the working group were given to elected members to help inform their decision.</p>
Consultation survey	The Survey was open to Stirling Council tenants and housing applicants on the Council's online consultation platform (engage platform)	<p>The consultation survey ensured that we complied with our legal duties to consult with all tenants and applicants on changes to our allocations Policy.</p> <p>We received 146 responses to the online consultation from tenants and applicants</p> <p>The results of the consultation survey and our response to these are outlined below.</p>
Briefing Session	Councillors	A briefing session was held with councillors in November 2022 to inform them of the Policy options that were being considered as well as the consultation results.

Following all of the above consultation, a preferred Policy option was taken to the Council's Housing Advisory Group in October 2022. This group is made up of members of registered tenant organisations, Council Officers and elected members. At this meeting, the Housing Advisory Group approved the development of the new Policy.

The revised Allocations Policy was then discussed at the Council's Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee in November 2022, and councillors agreed the new Policy at this meeting. The new Policy will be fully implemented by April 2023.

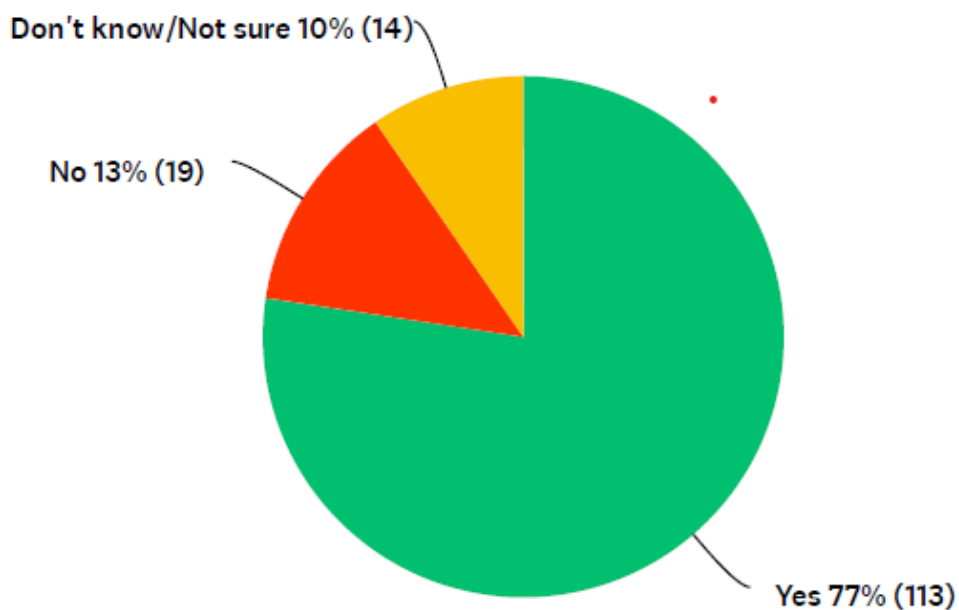
Consultation Survey Results

We asked all of our tenants and applicants 14 questions on different areas of our Allocations Policy. The responses to these questions, and how the Council has used these responses to shape our new Allocations Policy is outlined below.

Question 1 – Do you think that victims of anti-social behaviour should be given additional points where there is evidence they are being harassed or abused at their home?

We asked this question as we were considering introducing harassment points.

Survey Response

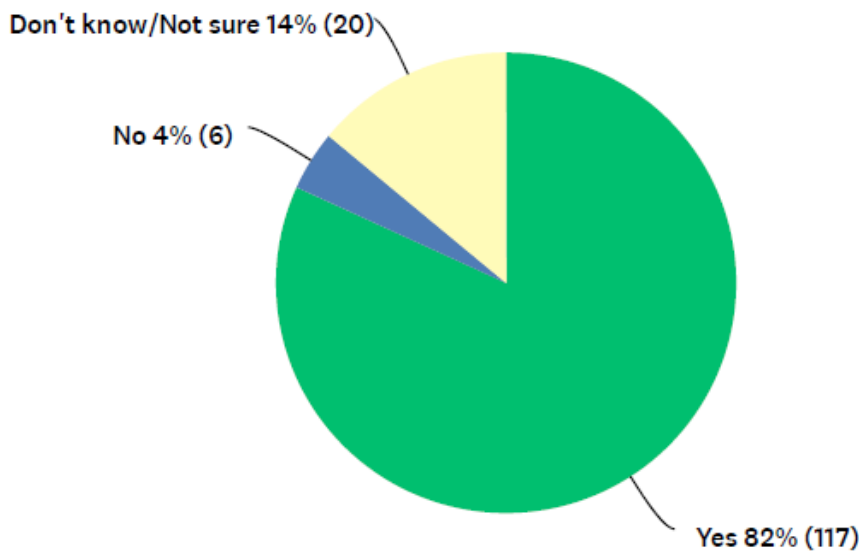


You said	Nearly 80% of people who responded said we should introduce additional points for those who have evidence they are being harassed or abused.
We did	Based on the responses we received, we are now introducing harassment points.

Question 2 – Should the Council take account of anti-social behaviour in an area, previous anti-social behaviour of applicants and the suitability of a property for an applicant when letting

We asked this question as we were considering introducing a sensitive lets process for a allocating properties where there has been known previous anti-social behaviour

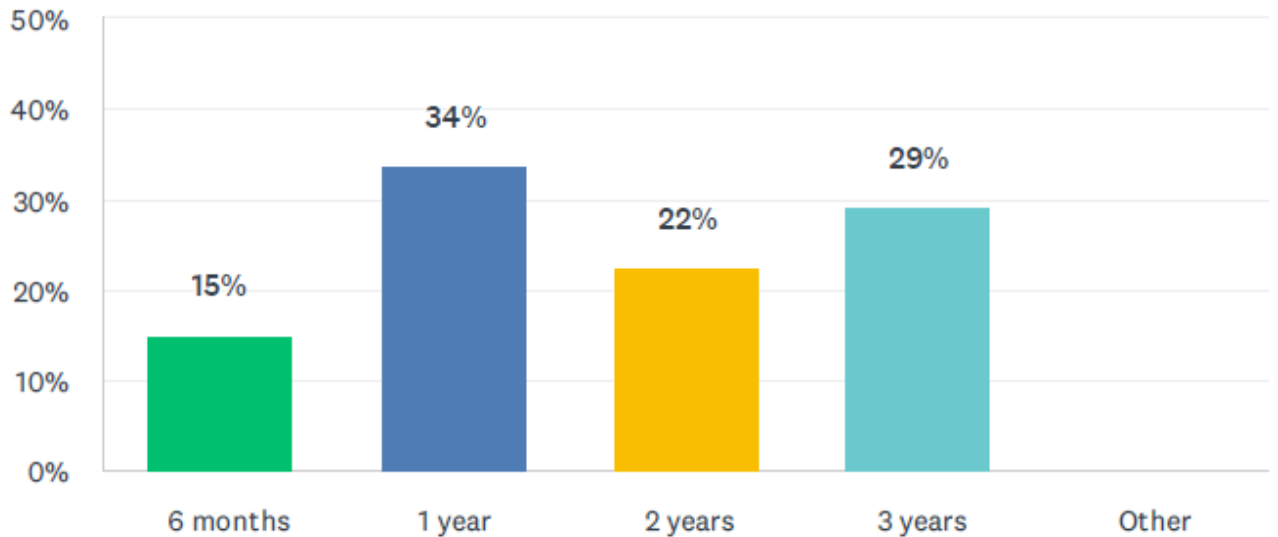
Survey Response



You said	82% of those who responded have said that they feel we should take into account previous anti-social behaviour when allocating properties
We did	We took on board that a large number of people felt we should take into account previous anti-social behaviour when looking at suitability of a property for an applicant when letting and are introducing a sensitive lets process. This process lets us consider the suitability of the household at the top of the housing list.

Question 3 – What should be the suspension period (where an applicant will not be offered a home) if someone has been the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour?

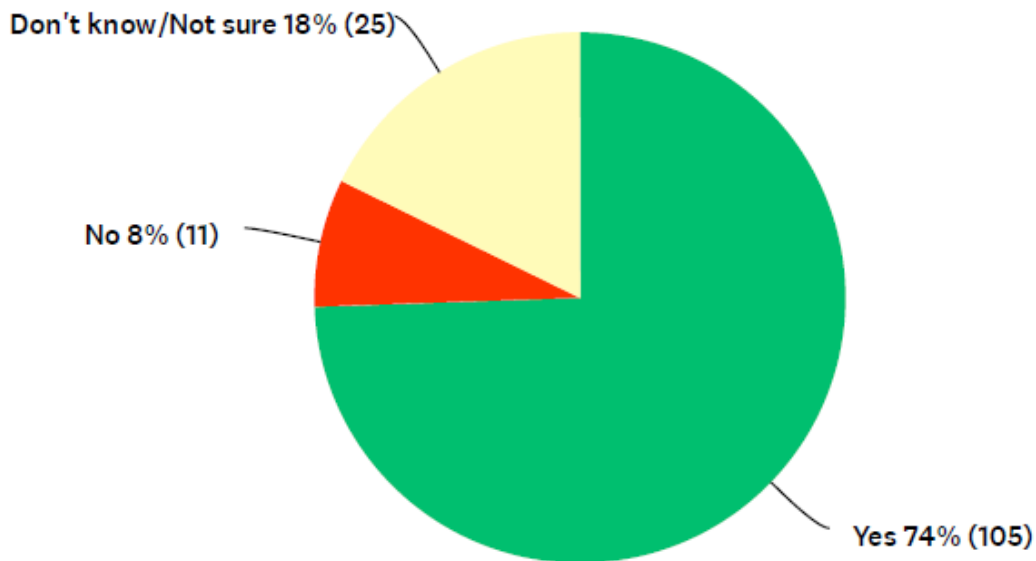
We asked this question to see if this should be increased from the current suspension period of a year.



You said	34% of applicants felt it should remain at 1 year
We did	We took on board that the respondent’s responses were varied and that the most popular response was that the suspension length should be 1 year. Based on this we have kept the suspension length at 1 year.

Question 4 – Should the Council have a different way of lettings less popular properties?

We asked this question to see if we should introduce a new ready to let process to help allocate less popular properties.

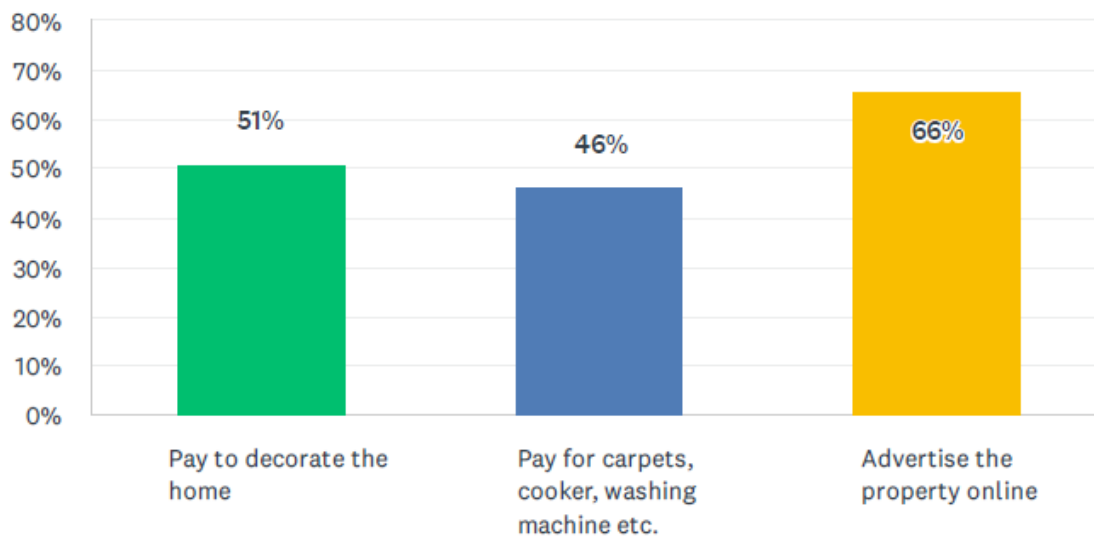


You said	A large proportion of those who responded (74%) felt we should introduce different ways of letting less popular properties.
We did	We have introduced a new process for letting less popular properties where these would be advertised and people express an interest in them.

Question 5 – If yes, should the Council do anything else to try and let these properties quickly? (Select all that apply)

As a follow on to the previous question we asked if there was anything else we could try and let these properties quicker.

Survey Response

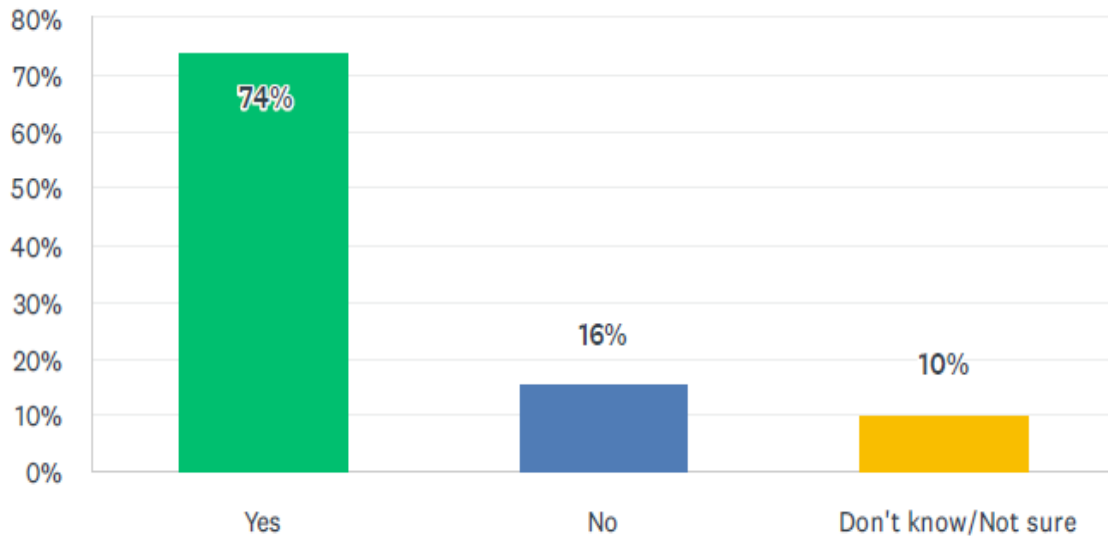


You said	Based on responses to question 4 and 5 the majority of respondents felt we should look at different ways to help let properties that are less popular and that advertising online would be a good way.
We did	<p>We are introducing a new process called 'ready to let' to help advertise properties that are less popular.</p> <p>Although we haven't included this in our Policy, we have also reviewed our processes and if a property is less popular we would look to decorate the property to a higher standard than we normally would.</p>

Question 6 - Should applicants who are living with friends and family who don't have their own bedroom be given extra points to reflect this need?

We asked this question to get people's views on whether we should introduce a new level of insecurity points for those who are living with friends and family and do not have access to their own room.

Survey Response

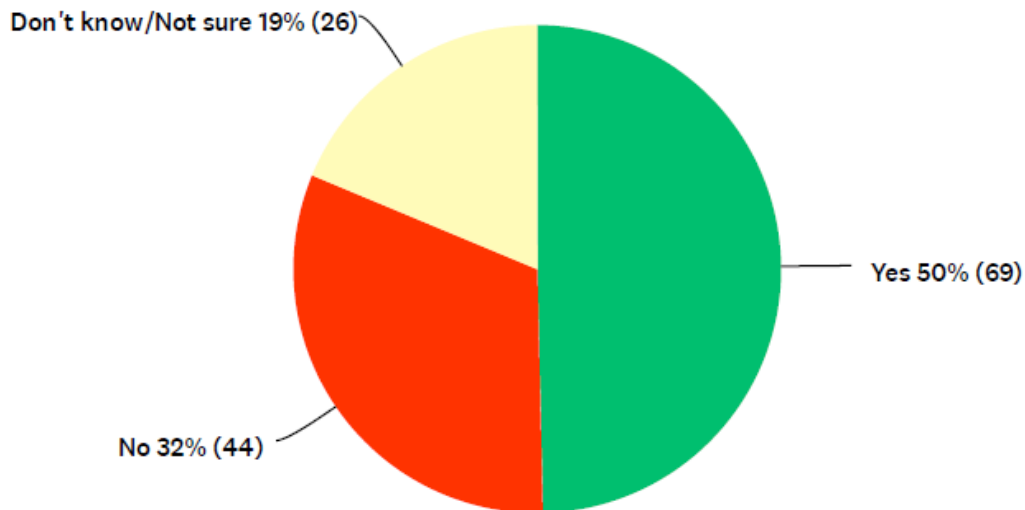


You said	The majority of respondents felt that we should introduce a new level of points.
We did	We have increased the level of insecurity points for those who are staying with family and friends and do not have access to their own bedroom. People in this situation now receive the middle rate of insecurity points (100 points) instead of the lower rate (50 points) they previously did.

Question 7: Should Stirling Council increase the number of properties let to our waiting group (this group is people who aren't existing Council tenants who are in housing need)?

We asked this question as the percentage of properties let to our waiting group was previously 15% and we felt this should be increased to try and prevent people from becoming homeless.

Survey Response

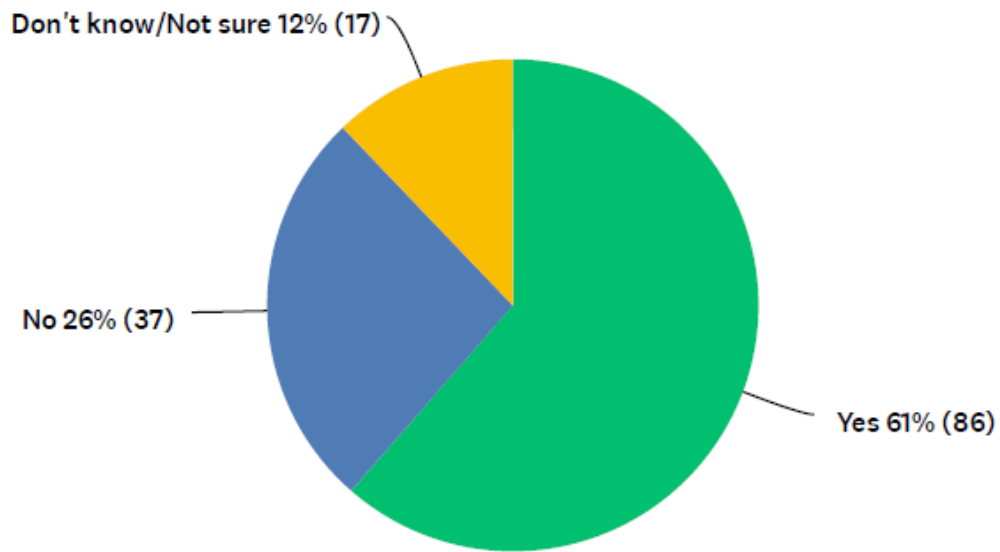


You said	Half of all respondents felt we should increase the percentage of properties let to our waiting group, with only 32% saying that this should not be increased.
We did	Based on the responses that we received, we have now increased the percentage of properties we let to our waiting list every year to 20%.

Question 8 - Should there be more flexibility to allow applicants to be offered a home with less bedrooms than the Policy says?

We asked this question as we were considering allowing larger families more flexibility on the size of property they would be offered due to having a lack of larger properties.

Survey Response

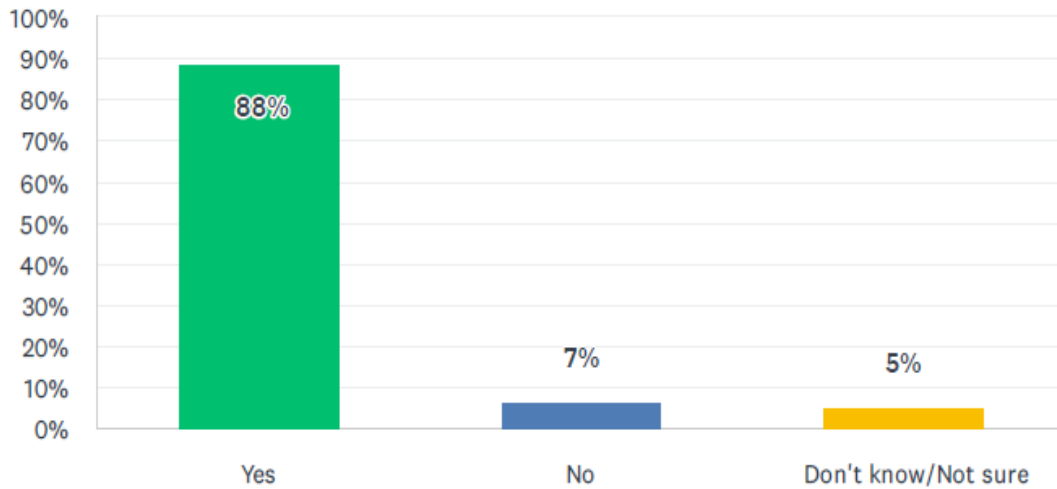


You said	Over half of the people responding to the survey felt that we should allow more flexibility on the size of property larger families could be offered.
We did	Based on this response, we have changed our Policy to allow families with three or more children more flexibility in the size of property they would be offered.

Question 9 Should Stirling Council consider financial incentives to encourage people in larger or adapted properties to move if they no longer need this type of home?

We asked this question as we were considering giving financial incentives to help get larger or adapted properties back to re-let from those who no longer require them.

Survey Response

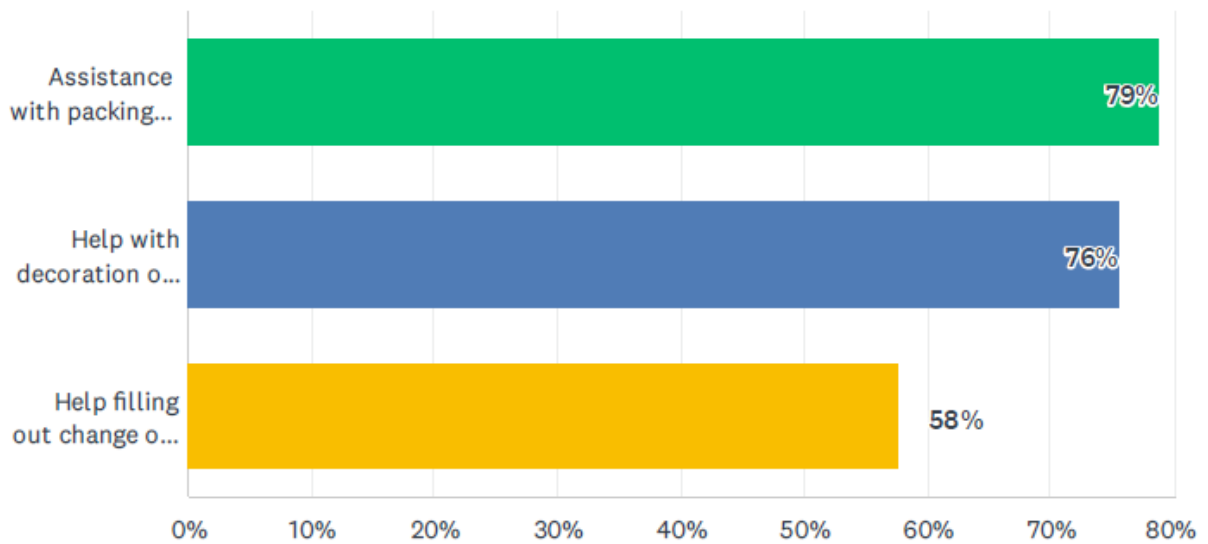


You said	The vast majority of those who responded (88%) felt we should introduce financial incentives to help encourage people to move from properties they no longer require.
We did	In the new Policy we are introducing a £2,000 payment to Council tenants who move from a four bedroom or wheelchair accessible property that they no longer require.

Question 10 If yes, should other incentives be offered? (Select all that apply)

This question is linked to question 9 to see what other incentives we should consider using.

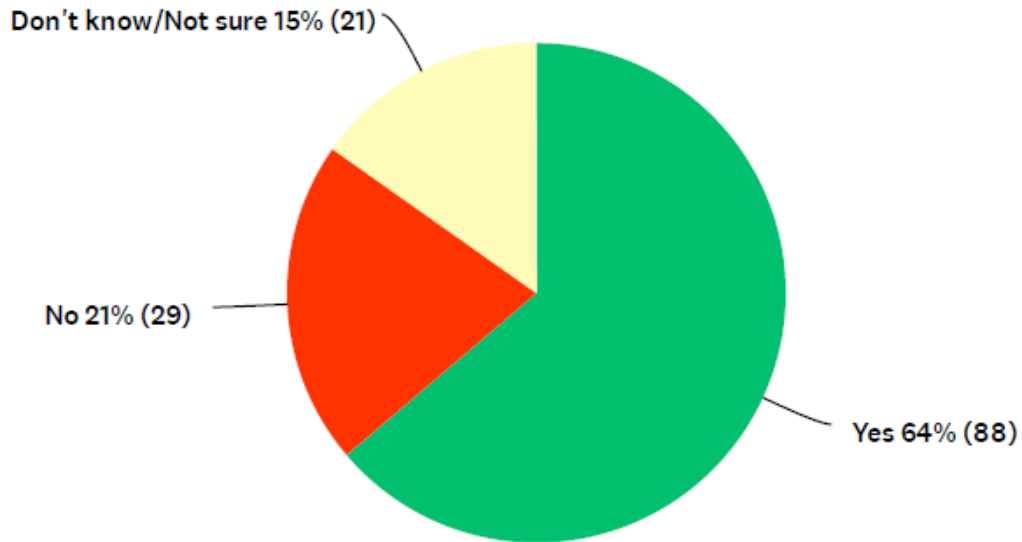
Survey Response



You said	The majority of those who responded felt we should look at provide other types of assistance as well.
We did	Based on the responses we are reviewing the support we provide people to help them with moving.

Question 11 Should the Council reduce the number of properties we use for temporary accommodation?

Survey Response

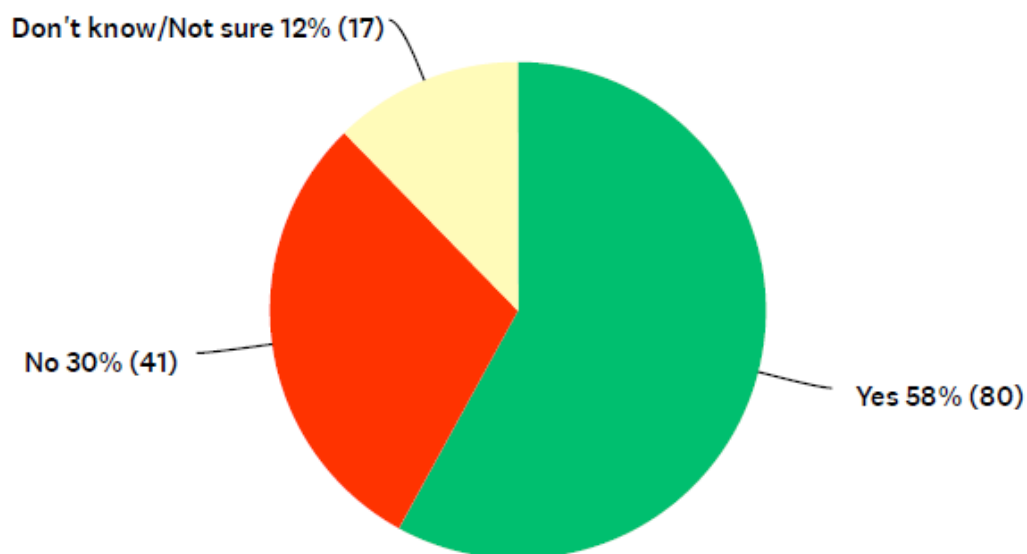


You said	64% of people thought that we should reduce the number of properties we use as temporary accommodation.
We did	Based on the results of our consultation, we are providing the opportunity to homeless households, on a case by case basis, to convert their temporary tenancies to a permanent tenancy. This will mean that over time we have less properties used as temporary accommodation, as well as meeting the needs of homeless households who have spent a significant period in temporary accommodation.

Question 12 - Should the Council try to rehouse homeless applicants as quickly as possible by making one reasonable offer of housing?

Under the existing Allocations Policy, homeless households receive two reasonable offers of housing, however we were considering reducing this to one reasonable offer to ensure we were rehousing people as quickly as possible.

Survey Response

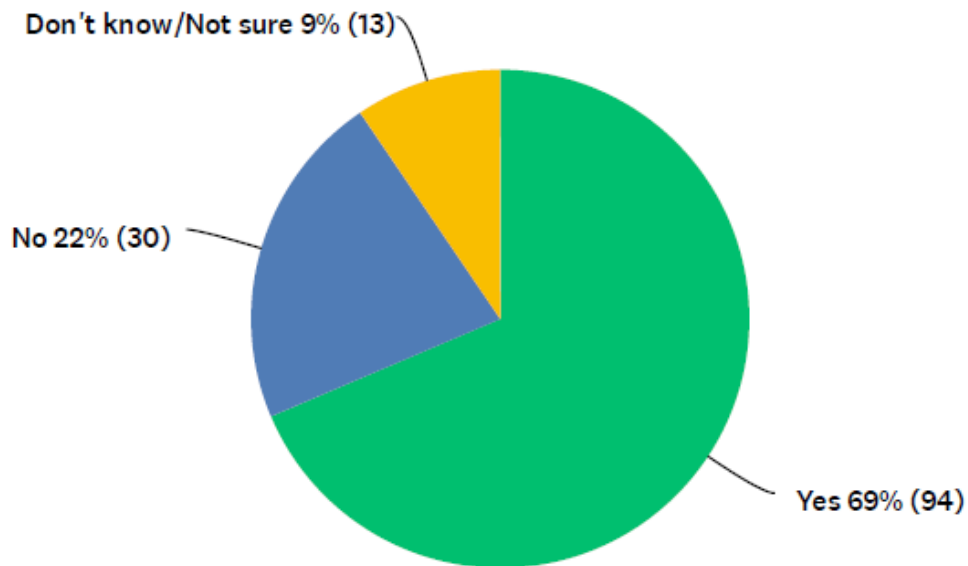


You said	Nearly 60% of those who responded felt we should reduce the number of offers made to homeless households to one.
We did	While we haven't changed our Policy at the moment, we are discussing making this change in the near future.

Question 13 - Should homeless households be required to choose a larger number of letting areas of choice?

To try and house homeless households as quickly as possible, we were considering increasing the number of areas people had to consider housing in so that there was a reasonable chance of being made an offer as quickly as possible.

Survey Response

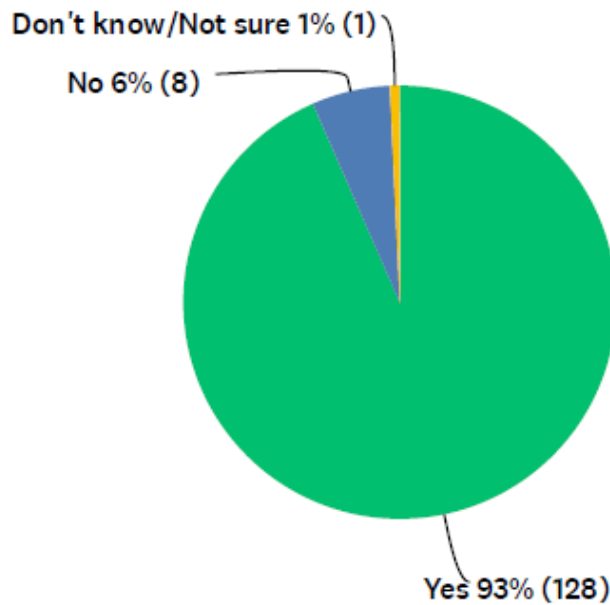


You said	69% of those who responded believed homeless households should be required to choose a larger number of letting areas
We did	We have changed our homeless grouping areas which set out the areas homeless households will be made an offer of housing in. While in urban areas of Stirling we have increased the number of areas homeless households have to choose, in rural areas we have reduced this to make sure lets that we make are sustainable.

Question 14 - Should the Council let properties with specific adaptations to people with a need for these?

This question was asked to see if we should have more flexibility when allocating properties that have specific adaptations to those who require them.

Survey Response



You said	The vast majority (93%) of people responding felt we should allocate properties with specific adaptations to those with a particular need for these.
We did	We have added a section into the Allocations Policy to ensure we let adapted properties to people who need them.