

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy (Introduced by the Executive Member for Homes and Business)	Executive Cabinet	13 September 2012

## SELECTMOVE EVALUATION

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To make Executive Cabinet aware of information regarding lettings of properties through the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings system, Selectmove, through which the majority of social housing in Chorley has been allocated since 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. The Executive Cabinet is made aware of the findings of this report and the future actions.

### BACKGROUND

3. In 2005 the Government of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a national housing strategy, *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All*, and this document set the Choice Based Lettings policy objectives for the Government of the time. One of these key objectives was

*“to develop choice based lettings schemes on a regional and/or sub-regional basis, recognising that housing markets do not follow local authority boundaries”*

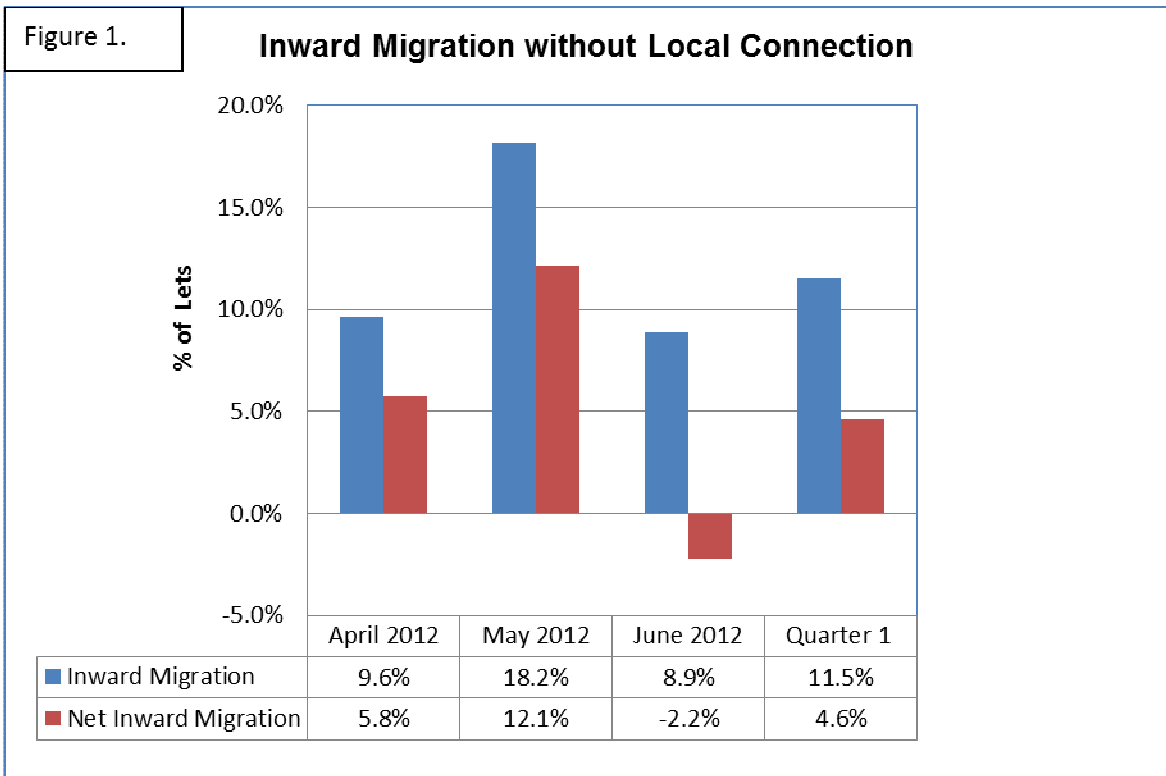
4. Choice Based Letting systems are designed to allow the applicant to have more choice over where they live by proactively bidding on properties they want to live in rather than waiting to be allocated a property on a traditional waiting list. Allowing choice is designed to create more sustainable communities in which people have chosen to live, and also is designed to be a more effective use of very limited social housing stock.
5. In March 2011 Chorley Council joined the two other main councils in the Central Lancashire Housing Market Area, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council, in the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings partnership called Selectmove. South Ribble and Preston City Council had been jointly operating a choice based lettings system since 2007. In March 2011 CCH also joined the partnership.
6. At the time of making the decision the Council recognised the benefits of giving people in the area more choice, however, it was considered important that people with a local connection to Chorley accessed a significant number of the Chorley properties and net migration to a maximum of 10% was considered acceptable. However, due to concerns this policy is being reviewed in respect of the gross inward migration.

### MIGRATION ANALYSIS

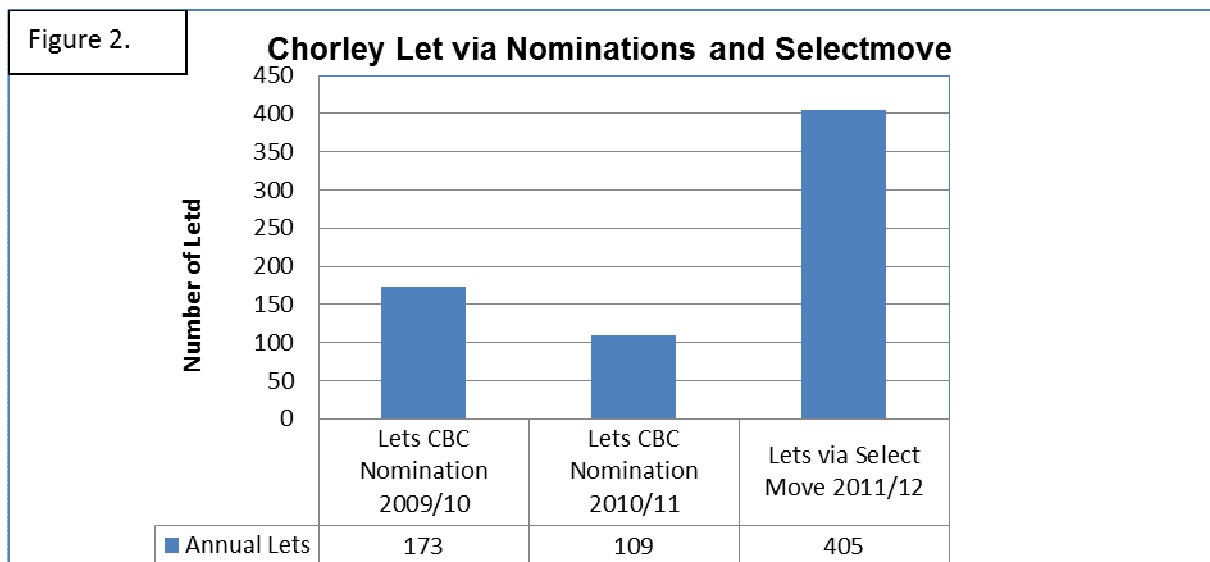
7. Following the first year of implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 we have undertaken analysis to identify the level of migration. Throughout the last financial year

there were 405 lets in Chorley and 80.2% of the lets were to households living in Chorley or with a Chorley connection (e.g. employment, previously lived in the area, or to give or receive support). Therefore inward migration from other council areas with no local connection was 19.8%, however when the households in Chorley who chose to move to Preston or South Ribble the net inward migration is 10.4%. It was also found that just over 20% of inwardly migrating households without a local connection were housed in the low demand/high turnover Martindales flat complex in Clayton Green, which may have been otherwise hard to let.

8. The level of inward migration is likely to be due in part to the attractiveness of Chorley’s housing offer, but it is also probable that it is affected by Chorley being the last council of the three to become a partner with Preston and South Ribble using Selectmove since 2005 and 2007 respectively. Whilst the number of Chorley Households on Selectmove is similar to South Ribble’s, a similar size authority, the number of bids placed by Chorley residents was less than half that of the number placed by South Ribble residents in 2011/12.
9. The move from an inactive waiting list to a proactive bidding system is a significant one, and the residents of the other two local authorities have had several years to become familiar with the bidding process. Therefore it is likely that the level of net inward migration maybe due in part, to customers with a local connection to Chorley not being familiar with Selectmove, and whilst this is expected to improve over time, there is more that can be done to promote Selectmove and educate Chorley applicants on the need to regularly bid in order to successfully obtain properties of their choice.
10. In the first quarter of this financial year 2012/13, the number of Chorley properties let to people with a local connection seems to be increasing, and this could be due to Chorley applicants becoming more familiar with the system. As seen in figure 1 below net inward migration was only 4.6% for the first quarter with a negative figure in June. The -2.2% net migration in June illustrates that more people moved from Chorley to the other two council areas through Selectmove than moved into Chorley without a local connection.



11. Prior to the introduction of Selectmove the Council would have been allocated a number of the Registered Providers' properties into which the Council could nominate people from the Council's waiting list using the Council's Allocation Policy. Under Selectmove we have a common allocations policy that all partners work to and the Registered Providers who joined the scheme have agreed to put a 100% of their lets into the Selectmove system.
12. As a consequence of this change, with 405 lets through Selectmove in 2011/12 the number of properties in the borough that are let according to the council's allocation policy has drastically increased and Figure 2. Illustrates a dramatic increase from the number of nominations received in the previous two years before Selectmove when compared to lets through Selectmove in the last year.
13. The 405 lets would have been made anyway but we would only be aware of many of them when they are reported at the end of the year. Now through Select Move, the Council can monitor lettings on a weekly or even daily basis if need be, allowing far more accountability.



## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE ACTIONS

14. Since the introduction of Select Move, inward migration has been higher than anticipated just exceeding the maximum 10% threshold. However there are early signs of this decreasing in Q1 of this year. As net inward migration was negative in June 2012 it shows that Chorley residents are also exercising choice to move to other areas.
15. In order to increase the supply of social housing to households with a local connection and ensure that the 10% threshold is not exceeded going forward. A review of the current policy options is being undertaken working with partners in the Select Move scheme as a matter of urgency. In the interim a number of actions will be undertaken and these are outlined below:
  - Pro-active promotion of Select Move to Chorley residents is currently being worked on and will start in September including a press release, posters and a new quick reference guide which will also inform applicants who need assistance how Chorley Council can help them bid for properties;
  - Close monitoring of migration on a monthly basis so early interventions can take place, and a breakdown of lets is also being requested off Registered Providers;

- A new Selectmove application form will make it easier to monitor and report on local connection, in conjunction with changes to the online forms;
  - All future s.106 agreements to continue to have robust local lettings criteria;
  - Lettings of s.106 properties (plus other council or developer contribution properties) to be closely scrutinised at first and subsequent lets;
  - All new build and newly acquired social housing to be covered by a new Local Connection Policy
  - Cross-directorate training on Selectmove so more staff are able to assist applicants where help is needed
16. Choice of housing and area is key to low turnover in social housing, and is conducive to building sustainable communities, and through Selectmove choice is possible. With the above measures it is anticipated that more properties located in Chorley will be let to households with a Chorley connection in the borough and who can also exercise their choice to live in them.
17. It is important that Executive Cabinet is aware on the migration situation in the first 5 quarters for which Selectmove has been operating.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

18. None.

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

19. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	X
Safe Respectful Communities	X	Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			

**BACKGROUND**

20. Since the introduction in off Selectmove the issue of migration has been one of interest to members and this report summarises the first 15 months.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. There are no financial implications in the report at this stage.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

23. No comments

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND POLICY

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Mick Coogan	5552	23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2012	***