

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Advice Services	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 th October 2015

REPORT TO PROVIDE A MONITORING UPDATE FOLLOWING THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP INQUIRY INTO SELECTMOVE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report provides the final update on progress made to implement the fifteen recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group which looked into Select move. The final report of the task group was published in April 2014 and it was endorsed by Executive Cabinet in August 2014.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the final updates provided in section 12.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. This report provides the final update on the outstanding actions from the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group inquiry into Select move.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

BACKGROUND

5. In 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Task Group to undertake a scrutiny inquiry to look at the Select Move Choice Based Lettings scheme, of which the Council is a member, alongside 9 Registered Providers of social housing (hereafter referred to as RPs). The Select Move scheme is the method by which social housing in Chorley (in addition to Preston and South Ribble) is allocated.
6. Objectives were agreed to investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs to the satisfaction of the applicants, by reviewing a) the application processes b) the allocation processes and c) the standard of allocated properties.

7. Desired Outcomes of the review included to secure a choice-based lettings service that meets the needs of Chorley residents, and to identify areas of improvement on condition of property at handover, and finally, to reduce waiting times and lists.
8. Following a detailed review, including desk top analysis and engagement with partners and customers, the task group concluded that Select Move does largely meet our customers' needs, as satisfaction is good and allocations are being made within a period we considered to be reasonable. The majority of customers when asked if the Council should revert back to the old system said that we should not. Choice and personal preference are key elements of the scheme and so these were found to have a bearing on how long a customer may wait until they secure a property (for example, some customers prefer to wait for a particular street or area until they place a bid on a property).
9. Reducing the waiting list was a desired objective and this has been achieved. A recent snapshot taken on 31/8/2015 illustrates the total waiting list (which includes those not in housing need but seeking social housing) as 938. This figure was 1522 when the overview and scrutiny task group was first initiated in September 2013.

Chorley Select Move Households as of 31st August 2015						
Band / Bedroom Need	A	B	C	D	E	Total
1	12	53	77	127	217	487
2	6	17	48	115	134	322
3	1	5	7	49	32	97
4+	1	4	3	14	16	38
Total	20	79	135	305	399	938

Source: Select Move Data

10. The table below illustrates the number of recorded lets made within the past three full years, rising from 561 in 2012/13 to 638 in 2014/15.

Chorley Social Housing Let Via Select Move by Year					
Bedrooms / Year	1	2	3	4+	Total
2012/13	204	225	121	11	561
2013/14	189	269	151	7	616
2014/15	180	287	157	14	638

Source: Select Move Data

11. The implementation of the majority of the recommendations require the willingness and cooperation of our partners, particularly Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) as the Council no longer has any housing.
12. Below is the list of fifteen recommendations and the corresponding final update on progress made to date.

Overview & Recommendation	Update
That there continues to be regular monitoring by the Council of the level of net migration into Chorley,	Net Inward migration is monitored in the Housing Team on a monthly basis. The figures below demonstrate a significant reduction in net inward

including periodic reporting to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to ensure the new policy achieves the overall aims of prioritising Chorley properties for those with a connection to the borough, and migration does not exceed 10%.	<p>migration to Chorley.</p> <table> <tr> <td>2012/13:</td><td>7.8%</td></tr> <tr> <td>2013/14:</td><td>8.8%</td></tr> <tr> <td>2014/15:</td><td>-0.8%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Q1 2015/16:</td><td>-2.7%</td></tr> </table>	2012/13:	7.8%	2013/14:	8.8%	2014/15:	-0.8%	Q1 2015/16:	-2.7%
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That each Registered Provider review their processes for handing over properties at relet stage, including both recording the time taken to prepare a property ready for a let and also the level of assistance for new tenants. That all Registered Providers look to raise their offer to the same standard across all providers	<p>RPs continue to be committed to letting properties and eliminating voids and so each has provisions for flexibility when it comes to facilitating a let. This flexibility can vary from new kitchen units, additional decoration or even carpets. There are also provisions for help with moving.</p>								
That each Registered Provider review the provision for a decoration allowance for new tenants and review its level, increasing it where necessary, to ensure it is sufficient.	<p>All RPs in Chorley continue to offer a decoration allowance at a similar amount per room for new tenants and all have the flexibility to vary this offer dependant on the condition of the property they are moving into and also their vulnerability. RPs feel that unless a tenant is vulnerable (in which case decoration may be undertaken on their behalf) decoration is a personal choice and should be undertaken by the tenant.</p>								
That the partnership consider the provision of surgeries or drop in sessions for customers to allow face to face support and demonstrations of how to perform certain tasks on the Select Move system.	<p>As reported previously, each RP has in place a service offer for customers around digital inclusion. These include specialist officers who work on an outreach basis, providing customers with practical help to learn how to use their own technology and or help to access online systems where a customer is unsure what they need to do.</p> <p>The Council has a corporate project to promote digital inclusion and this involves a series of drop in events across the borough to enable customers to learn digital skills and be able to do things for themselves which includes accessing Select move.</p>								
That any provision for surgeries or drop-in include the rural areas and are promoted to ensure that older people are aware of them and able to attend	<p>As above, the Councils roll out of the digital access events will include locations in the rural areas which will ensure vulnerable residents have access to assistance to develop digital skills.</p>								
That the partnership considers undertaking a process of proactive marketing to those who are not	<p>As reported previously, for those customers who are identified as experiencing some difficulties, either because of a lack of access to a computer</p>								

<p>bidding regularly and offer to provide assistance. This should include promotion of any drop- in sessions, mailing out of the newsletter and assisting bidding on properties by proxy.</p>	<p>or because they are unable to use the technology, steps will be put in place to assist them.</p> <p>As above, each RP have measures in place to provide assistance to those who need it</p>
<p>That the Registered Providers within the partnership are encouraged to provide more details in their property adverts, including detail of any specific local connection provisions (for example in rural villages) and also the provision of photographs on the majority of adverts</p>	<p>All RPs are committed to providing photographs on their adverts and following the review, there have been no complaints received regarding the lack of photographs on adverts. Standard practice is for an RP to include a photograph of the actual property to be let or a picture of a similar property (or artist impression where new build).</p>
<p>That the partners continue to work collaboratively to develop a database of adapted properties which will ensure that when an adapted property becomes available, it can be advertised with all of the relevant information to ensure it is appropriately allocated.</p>	<p>This project is being led by the Registered Providers and the Council are fully committed to being engaged.</p>
<p>That the Registered Providers within the partnership endeavour to include any properties which are to be direct matched, on the Select Move system, clearly specifying it is not available for other applicants, in order to enhance transparency and integrity in the scheme</p>	<p>Direct matches are recorded on the system and the figures reported on the quarterly monitoring report which is presented to the Select move Steering Group on a quarterly basis. The reports demonstrate that RPs are recording these.</p>
<p>That the partnership ensures that any affordability policies or tests are consistent across Registered Providers and that these policies do not wholly exclude groups of customers.</p>	<p>As reported previously, some of the RPs are operating affordability policies which include looking at customer's financial circumstances and their ability to afford to run a home and budget. The councils housing staff will engage with RPs where any issues arise in individual cases and no complaints have been received regarding the operation of such policies.</p>
<p>That the partnership ensures that as part of any affordability policy, there are provisions available which will help customers to improve their circumstances in</p>	<p>Each of the RPs with these policies offers assistance to customers with income maximisation and financial inclusion in order to address fundamental issues and improve customer's prospects of being allocated a</p>

order to pass any assessment of affordability threshold in order to secure a property and that these are consistently available across all Registered Providers.	property.
That the Council continues to work with Registered Providers in order to enable new affordable housing of the right type and tenure is available so local housing need is met.	<p>The Council has an excellent working relationship with the two main developing RPs in Chorley and have delivered a good supply of affordable housing in recent years.</p> <p>2012/13 - 183 units were delivered</p> <p>2013/14 – 129 units were delivered</p> <p>2014/15 - 165 units were delivered</p>
That the partnership amends the banding notification letter to include confirmation as to the evidence on which the banding is based.	This was implemented previously.
That the partnership recognises the importance of treating social housing customers with dignity and respect and that customer service standards are met.	Each RP has internal mechanisms for collecting information regarding customer satisfaction and report that there is overall high satisfaction from their customers. A relevant point is that occasionally negative decisions regarding allocations need to be made and therefore 100% customer satisfaction may not always be achievable. However it was agreed between the RPs that existing customer care policies and standards of each respective partner is sufficient to ensure a consistent standard of service is delivered.

13. In conclusion, the scrutiny review of Select move has demonstrated that the system is effective and meets customer's needs. There has been an upgrade of the Select move system to version 8 which has delivered improvements for both the customer and also the back office.
14. The most significant issue concerning Select move, namely that of inward migration has been addressed through the implementation of a policy revision. The monitoring data illustrates the impact these measures have had on ensure customers with a local connection to the borough have the greatest chance of securing homes in Chorley.

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Appendix

Graphs to Illustrate Migration Fluctuations

Figure 1

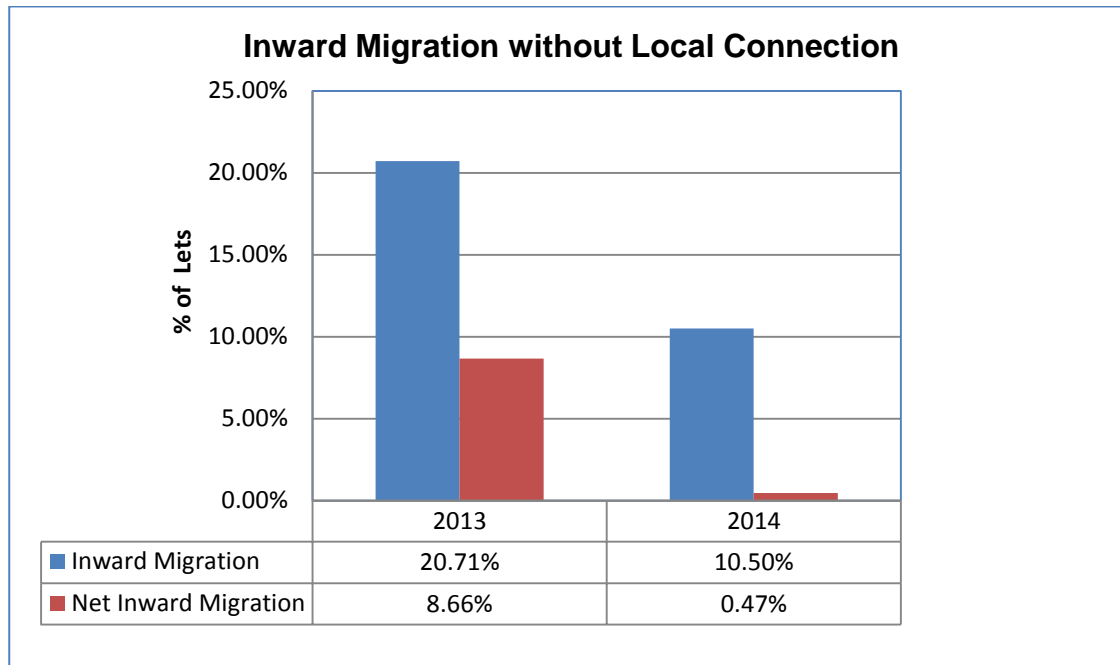


Figure 2

