

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move 2021

Thursday, 2nd December 2021, 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Town Hall and Youtube

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move 2021, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No	Item	
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2	Background Information - Select Move	
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(Pages 9 - 72)

	Rachel Stewart to present background information and report relating to Select Move in the Borough.	
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Gary Hall
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move 2021

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Select Move	Committee Task Group	2 nd December 2021

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Yes
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

1. This report has been produced to update members on the operation of the Select Move Partnership, specifically the updates on recommendations from previous Overview and Scrutiny Task Group in 2014.

Recommendations to Scrutiny Committee

2. To consider the information in this report and decide on any further action required.

Reasons for recommendations

3. As requested at Overview and Scrutiny Committee a full report is required to address issues with the administration of Select Move social housing register.

Other options considered and rejected

4. No other options considered necessary.

Executive summary

5. This report gives an overview of the Select Move Partnership, the current opportunities and challenges of this system. Previous scrutiny aimed to ensure that Select Move as a service is meeting the needs of Chorley Residents with a focus on;
 - The application process
 - The allocations process
 - The standard of properties when let
6. Recommendations were made in 2014 as a result of this review which we seek to provide updates on.
7. It is important to note that although as the council we steer the partnership, any recommendations past/future can be raised with the Select Move partnership and any proposed changes can be explained and put to a vote. However, as a partner we have no ability to enforce desired changes outside of the current memorandum of understanding.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

Background to the report

9. Select Move is the administration of social housing for Chorley in line with statutory duties in The Housing Act 1996 (part VI) in relation to the allocation of social housing. The intent is to pool resources in terms of processing applications and letting of properties in a fair and transparent way, in line with a common allocations policy which awards priority to applicants based on their circumstances.
10. It should promote choice for our customers while delivering safe and suitable housing for residents. Our landlord partners are charged with providing decent homes to our joint customers and to help us achieve our aim of thriving neighbourhoods and communities.
11. Issues have been raised with the delivery of the choice-based lettings system by members and by customers in terms of the quota of social housing properties advertised via Select Move, the ICT platform used to administer the system, the information given about vacant properties and accessing advice or support from the Housing Solutions team.

12. An update was provided on 30th September 2021 in relation to the Partnership. In brief these updates included;

- An upgrade of the Civica web based system for applicants, landlord partners and the local authorities; to advertise and let the properties as agreed in line with the common allocations policy. The upgrade should provide an easier to use online tool for customers, making it easier to view and bid for advertised properties. Customers will be able to access Select Move system on mobile devices such as a phone and tablet. The upgrade was also required in terms of the functionality and compatibility with the web browsers used corporately. We also expect to be able to retrieve more detailed local data with the upgraded reporting functions in the system, which will help us to answer some of the outstanding queries and have oversight of the operations of Select Move.
- The agreement to appoint a Select Move Co-Ordinator to chair the Select Move steering group, work alongside the local authorities and RP partners, ensure adherence to the agreed policy and address issues raised for the benefit of all. This gives us a single point of contact for the issues raised and alongside the upgrade gives us the capacity to report in more detail and ensure adherence to the agreements of the partnership. This will be jointly funded by Chorley Council, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council. It is a post that will sit in Chorley’s Housing Solutions team and is due to go to advert imminently.
- The appointment of a new Housing Solutions Manager in Chorley to address the resourcing and operational issues within the team, ensuring customers can access the advice and support required as soon as possible, improving the service and access to the staff team despite the ongoing pressures as a result of current vacancies and staff sickness. The manager now in post is focussed on resolving the resource issue as swiftly as possible with agency staffing, ongoing recruitment and assistance from colleagues within/outside the council to improve access and the service offer to Chorley customers.

Update on the recommendations previously made by the Committee

13. The table below shows the recommendations of the 2014 Scrutiny report, an update in relation to these and any further action required where relevant

Recommendation	Update	Further actions
That each RP 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 RPs look raise their offer to the same standard across all providers.	Landlords will have an internal monitor for their average time to let void properties and are targeted on turning around as quickly as possible but they must also do so in line with their own void standard. Repairs and relets have been impacted by the pandemic (staffing, covid restrictions and availability of materials). There does not seem to	Updates to be requested at operational/steering group level regarding both void lengths and last void standard review date.

	<p>have been an appetite for RP's to standardise their offer of assistance to new tenants largely due to many of the registered providers having stock levels over a wider area and their new tenant offer being part of the national offer from their organisation</p>	<p>For discussion at operational/steering group and also for strategic review of commissioned support where assisted into accommodation by Housing Solutions</p>
<p>That each RP review the provision for a decoration allowance for new tenants and review its level, increasing it to ensure it where necessary to ensure it is sufficient.</p>	<p>It's unknown a review was conducted into this via the Select Move Steering group. Anecdotal information is that landlords provide these vouchers ad hoc dependent on the property and the economic circumstances of the tenant</p>	<p>To be discussed with partners at operational/steering groups as soon as possible.</p>
<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>	<p>This recommendation was implemented and a digital inclusion officer was appointed within the housing team at CBC to conduct drop in sessions throughout the borough so customers could be supported with completing Select Move applications online.</p> <p>From the initial sessions, it became evident that there was a need for digital support on a wider scale (such as support with completing online housing benefit and council tax support claims) – following this, the digital inclusion role was moved from housing into the customer services team.</p> <p>Subsequently, Lancashire West CAB were commissioned to do general digital inclusion sessions throughout the borough which included support with Select Move. These sessions were still being delivered daily, at different locations within the borough,</p>	<p>Review of current offer in line with recovery from pandemic operations required Communities team are looking to do some digital support with customers moving forward (potentially through the voluntary sector) and Housing Solutions will collaborate on this so Select Move support is included.</p>

	up until the start of the pandemic	
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.	The initial housing digital inclusion sessions took place borough-wide and included the outlying villages such as Croston, Eccleston, Mawdesley, Withnell and Brinscall as well as less rural locations.	As above for review following pandemic restrictions
That the partnership considers undertaking a process of proactive marketing to those who are not 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>This has been discussed at steering group previously but none of the partners have capacity to do this for all active applications, across the board.</p> <p>The RP's proactively contact their own transfer tenants and the LA's and RP's contact anyone in a priority band who hasn't placed a bid in the last 6 months.</p> <p>A renewals procedure has also been implemented (where a paper renewal form is sent out to each customer annually and needs signing and returning to advise that there has been no change of circumstances and the applicant wishes to remain on the register) and this results in many inactive accounts being closed down.</p> <p>The 6 month bidding reviews that all the partners conduct on their priority bands (A, B and C) also picks up any applicants who need additional support however, applicants who are active in bands D and E and not bidding regularly are not currently offered any additional support.</p>	
That the RPs within the	Select Move has been	Ongoing discussions can be

<p>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>updated to allow more information to be provided on property adverts (such as energy ratings) and there is also function for the RP's to upload photographs of properties however, most RP's either just use stock photographs or choose not to upload photographs for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>One is that many of the properties which go through Select Move are tenanted when the advert goes live (they tend to go out to advert as soon as the landlord receives notice from the tenant or serves notice on their tenant) so there is only a short turn-around time and it's not thought to be practical to get permission from existing tenants and arrange for photographs to be taken prior to putting the advert on.</p> <p>Additionally, good quality property photographs would take up a large volume of storage on the Civica system which would incur additional costs. RP's feel that photographs are of limited use and that a viewing of the property prior to sign up works better There could also be issues in relation to safeguarding and the potential for interested applicants to make contact with sitting tenants if a property can be distinguished by a photograph and these issues must be considered.</p>	<p>had with RPs about having more photos where appropriate.</p>
<p>That the partners continue to work collaboratively to develop a database of adapted properties which will ensure that when an</p>	<p>Historically, there have been issues with records of adapted properties being passed on when a new provider takes on the</p>	<p>We will pick this query up with RP partners to ask for this information if they have it or can easily retrieve it</p>

<p>adapted property becomes available, it can be advertised with all of the relevant information to ensure it is appropriately allocated.</p>	<p>housing stock from another provider so we have seen adapted properties advertised as general needs through the system however, this is happening less as existing providers conduct thorough surveys of their stock (for instance Jigsaw who took over from Adactus, CBC's stock-transfer housing association, are currently undertaking a borough-wide property survey which will pick up any adapted properties that have been missed).</p> <p>Additionally, there is scope within the system for anyone in an existing adapted property to be awarded band A on Select Move if they do not need adaptations which has encouraged more people to come forward and highlight that their property has adaptations.</p>	
<p>That the RPs 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>There is function through the system for RP's to direct match an applicant to a property and all partners have access to this information however, as all partners have agreed to advertise at least 75% of their stock through Select Move (this is reviewed to ensure compliance), meaning landlords still have scope to direct match outside of Select Move.</p>	<p>Further discussion required at operational/steering groups to ask landlords about use of this function and address any reluctance to do so</p>
<p>That the partnership lobbies Abris (now Civica) to implement the new system upgrade in order to improve the customer interface.</p>	<p>Abris (now Civica) have provided previous costings for an upgrade to the system but the partnership voted that it was not cost effective to go ahead at that time. However, due to the necessity of an upgrade to maintain functionality from</p>	

	<p>summer 2022; the partnership have now voted to go ahead with a system upgrade which is schedule to be completed early next year which will improve functionality and ease of use for customers,</p>	
<p>That there continues to be regular monitoring by the Council of the level of net migration into Chorley, to ensure the new policy achieves the overall aims of prioritising Chorley properties for those with a connection to the borough</p>	<p>There is a reporting function in the system that should pull this information, though it does not appear to have been done by the local authority previously.</p>	<p>Report to be produced as soon as possible. This can then be scheduled on a regular basis and will likely also sit with the SM co-ordinator.</p>
<p>That the partnership ensures that any affordability policies or tests are consistent across RPs and that these policies do not wholly exclude groups of customers.</p>	<p>Select Move has a standard income and expenditure form that all applicants complete and initial affordability checks are conducted based on this.</p> <p>Due to differences in rental costs from provider to provider and dependent on whether the property is social rent or affordable rent, the RP's conduct their own affordability checks in line with their own policies at the point of offer. The allocations policy itself excludes individuals/couples who earn above £60k annually.</p>	<p>Affordability assessments and applied policies of all landlord partners to be reviewed by incoming Select Move Co-Ordinator</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 order to pass any assessment of affordability threshold in order to secure a property and that these are consistently available across all RPs.</p>	<p>All partners are equipped to offer support (usually in the form of signposting) to customers with affordability issues due to things such as debt, unemployment and benefit problems but this is not consistent across the partnership as this type of support differs across the three Select Move areas and from registered provider to registered provider. Some RP's have dedicated</p>	<p>Review of provision/audit across the partnership required, again the SM Co-Ordinator can pick this up</p>

	<p>officers to provide support with employment and training and budgeting skills whilst others signpost into local VFS organisations providing this advice and support.</p>	
<p>That the Council continues to work with RPs in order to enable new affordable housing of the right type and tenure is available so local housing need is met.</p>	<p>Through section 106 agreements and the relationship that the spatial planning team have with developers and registered providers, the council aims to ensure that enough new affordable housing is built in the area.</p> <p>From the Select Move partnership point of view, new registered providers are coming onboard (this has increased recently) and there is a current costings review to make it more attractive to smaller partners to join the partnership (with the proposal of a sliding scale based on stock numbers rather than a flat fee)</p>	

Equality and diversity

- 14. Equality and Diversity is addressed by the Common Allocations Policy for the Select Move partnership.

Risk

The risk to the authority is in any lack of delivering against statutory duties to administer social housing as well as failing to work in partnership with our registered provider partners, making best use of the limited social housing available in the borough.

Background documents

- 15. 2014 Scrutiny Report including recommendations.
- 16. Select Move Allocations Policy.

17. Appendices

18. Appendix A
2014 Scrutiny Report

19. Appendix B etc.
Select Move Allocations Policy

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Select Move April 2014



CONTENTS PAGE

	Page No
1. PREFACE	3
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
3. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	6
4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	8
5. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION	13
6. FINDINGS	16
7. CONCLUSION	19
8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS	20

1. PREFACE

The Scrutiny inquiry into the Select Move Choice Based Lettings scheme was requested by Members of Chorley Council after concern was raised about the accessibility & user- friendliness of Select Move and also the perception that people from outside the sub region and without local connection were accessing properties in Chorley.

The scrutiny examined in detail how the scheme operates, exploring the profile of customers who use it. This included looking at how often customers use it and accessing their views about it, the work of the Registered Providers who participate in the scheme. Whether or not there is a consistency of approach was reviewed in particular.

The task group engaged with both partners and customers to ensure that all perspectives were considered and to ensure the scrutiny was balanced.

The findings were mainly positive and Select Move was demonstrated to be a fit- for - purpose, effective way for a number of partners over a sub-regional footprint, to work collaboratively to allocate social housing.

Notwithstanding the above, there are some important improvements which can be made to the scheme, including ensuring necessary safeguards for those who are not equipped to access digital services.

I would like to thank the Task Group Members for their deliberations, the officers and the external representatives and the residents of Chorley who made a contribution to this report. The representations we received have proved invaluable and enabled us to produce a set of recommendation that we feel will improve the present procedures and policies to better serve our residents of Chorley.



Councillor Graham Dunn (Chair)

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

Objectives

To investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs to the satisfaction of the applicants, by reviewing

- 1) The application processes
- 2) The allocation processes
- 3) The standard of allocated properties

Desired Outcomes

1. To secure a choice- based lettings service that meets the needs of Chorley residents.
2. To identify areas of improvement on condition of property at handover.
3. To reduce waiting times and lists.

Members were keen to ensure that all seven equality and diversity strands were fully taken into consideration throughout the review and were keen to work effectively in partnership with the RPs to facilitate any improvements across the board.

Task Group Membership

Councillor Graham Dunn (Chair)
Councillor Alison Hansford
Councillor Hasina Khan
Councillor Steve Holgate
Councillor Paul Leadbetter
Councillor June Molyneaux
Councillor Steve Murfitt
Councillor Paul Walmsley

Officer Support:

Lead Officers

Lesley-Ann Fenton, Director Partnerships, Planning and Policy
Zoë Whiteside, Head of Housing

Support Officers:

Michael Coogan, Principal Strategic Housing Officer
Stuart Dewhurst, Housing Team Leader (Options)

Democratic Services

Dianne Scambler Democratic and Member Services Officer

Meetings

The meeting papers of the Group can be found on the Council's website www.chorley.gov.uk/scrutiny. This includes the inquiry project outline and other relevant information on policy and procedures.

Contribution of Evidence

The Task Group would like to thank all those who have provided evidence and contributed to the Inquiry. Section 4 contains the details of those involved

2. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Cabinet is asked to consider the following recommendations:

1. That each RP 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 RPs look raise their offer to the same standard across all providers
2. That each RP review the provision for a decoration allowance for new tenants and review its level, increasing it to ensure it where necessary to ensure it is sufficient.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. That the partnership considers undertaking a process of proactive marketing to those who are not 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.
6. That the RPs 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.
7. 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.
8. That the RPs 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.
9. That the partnership lobbies Abris to implement the new system upgrade in order to improve the customer interface.
10. That there continues to be regular monitoring by the Council of the level of net migration into Chorley, to ensure the new policy achieves the overall aims of prioritising Chorley properties for those with a connection to the borough.
11. That the partnership ensures that any affordability policies or tests are consistent across RPs and that these policies do not wholly exclude groups of customers.

12. That the partnership ensures that as part of any affordability policy, there are provisions available which will help customers to improve their circumstances in order to pass any assessment of affordability threshold in order to secure a property and that these are consistently available across all RPs.

13. That the Council continues to work with RPs in order to enable new affordable housing of the right type and tenure is available so local housing need is met.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to ensure social housing is allocated to people in greatest need and these duties exist regardless of whether or not they still own social housing stock. For those authorities where a large scale voluntary stock transfer (LSVT) has taken place, and this applies to Chorley, the duties include assessing customers for social housing and ensuring that the legally defined categories of those in most need, namely 'reasonable preference categories' are given sufficient priority.

Select Move is a Choice Based Lettings Partnership that replaced traditional waiting list systems whereby each RP and local authority held its own waiting list and associated Allocations Policy and customers would have to apply to each one, in order to be considered for housing. Choice Based Lettings allocation systems were introduced towards the end of the last decade and were very much promoted nationally as good practice, enabling customers to have a choice of home and also ensuring transparency in the process of social housing allocation.

Chorley Council became a partner to the Select Move partnership in 2011 and prior to that date; a manual system of allocations was in place, which comprised a points-based policy, with customers being offered a property by officers as they moved to the top of the waiting list. There were penalties for customers who refused the offer of a property without justification.

Select Move is very much a partnership approach, based on the premise that all partners share the same Allocations Policy, same procedures and processes for assessing housing applications and jointly procure and manage the software necessary to administer the system. The partners share the costs of the software and work collaboratively to agree any system configurations and policy and procedural matters.

The Select Move system is a computer software product (provided by Abritas Software) and customers predominantly access the system via the internet, with applications, bidding and correspondence between provider and customer taking place digitally.

Applications can also be made in hard copy, telephone or face- to- face. Support and advice is available. Applications are assessed in accordance with a published Select Move Allocations Policy and supporting evidence must be provided in order for officers to accurately make an assessment of their housing need. There is also a smart phone version of the site available.

The Allocations Policy sets out how applications will be assessed and each application is prioritised into a band. There are 5 bands, from band A to E and briefly these include the following categories (please see policy document for full details):

Banding Criteria

Band	Overview of qualifying criteria
A	Medical/Welfare grounds-immediate life threatening condition which is seriously affected by the condition of the current housing Hospital discharge /or to prevent hospital admission(e.g. elderly) Protection of vulnerable adults or children Care leavers Release adapted properties Exceptional need to move (e.g. domestic abuse) Statutory overcrowded Private sector with category one hazard (HHSRS) Leaving supported accommodation and ready for independent living
B	Statutory homeless Under occupying by two bedrooms or more Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms or more Medical grounds- urgent need to move Need to give or receive essential long term care Homeless prevention
C	Entitled to reasonable preference due to non-priority homeless, intentionally homeless or otherwise homeless Need to move due to hardship Applicant without ground level access or in upper floor accommodation with one child under age of 10 years, including pregnancy. Accommodation lacks basic facilities
D	An applicant employed or undertaking training Positive community contribution Need to give or receive support Under occupying and likely to face hardship Over occupying by 1 bedroom
E	No housing need i.e. customers that do not qualify for additional preference but would like to move to alternative accommodation

Select Move is a web- based system and properties which are available are advertised each week by the RPs on the website, with information about property type size and

location with photographs being shown (though often they are not added). Applicants express their interest by placing ‘bids’ using their unique account, rather than waiting to be allocated a property. A shortlist of interested applicants is then created and the RP which manages that particular property, then reviews the shortlist and allocates the property to the most appropriate applicant according to the policy. The scheme promotes choice and sustainable communities since tenants are more likely to stay in a property that they have chosen themselves. Available properties are advertised for a particular band, based on a quota which is published in the policy. The quotas for bands A-E are 40%, 30%, 20%, 10% and 0% respectively.

The figure below illustrates the customer view when looking at Select Move.



The current partnership consists of the three central Lancashire authorities of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble along with 9 RPs that collectively have stock across the three boroughs.

The partners are governed by a Steering Group that is responsible for the strategic overview of the scheme, with senior representatives from all of the partner organisations attending. An Operational Group also exists and meets regularly to discuss day to day matters and specific issues or casework.

The Task Group was established to investigate the impact of the Select Move scheme for customers, considering if it meets our customer needs and expectations, how the scheme operates and how policy is applied. The Task Group also considered what improvements could be identified which would further enhance the scheme. Some

concerns had been raised about issues of inward migration to Chorley of those without a local connection to Chorley, particularly given the volume and availability of new build accommodation in Chorley as a result of the affordable housing programme.

The social sector in Chorley represents 13% of the total stock, which is approximately 6200 homes in total.

The largest stockholding RP is Chorley Community Housing (CCH) with 52% of the total stock or 3,200 units. Places for People are the second biggest, with 36 % or 2,200 units.

During the course of this scrutiny exercise, the Select Move Allocations Policy was reviewed and refreshed, partly in response to the Localism agenda and the new statutory guidance issued regarding the allocation of social housing. However, one key driver for reviewing the policy was the need to ensure local connection was a priority factor for customers and Chorley Council were strong advocates of this, particularly given the scale of the affordable programme in the Borough and the demand these properties generated.

The revised policy was ratified by all the partners respective Executive Cabinets and Boards and was implemented in February 2014. Part of this process required all customers on the housing register to complete a short review form and for local connection information to be verified. This exercise has essentially cleansed the housing register and has resulted in a reduction in the overall number of customers registered on Select Move. However the exercise is not yet complete and once it is, there are indications that it will reduce the total number of applicants currently on the housing register.

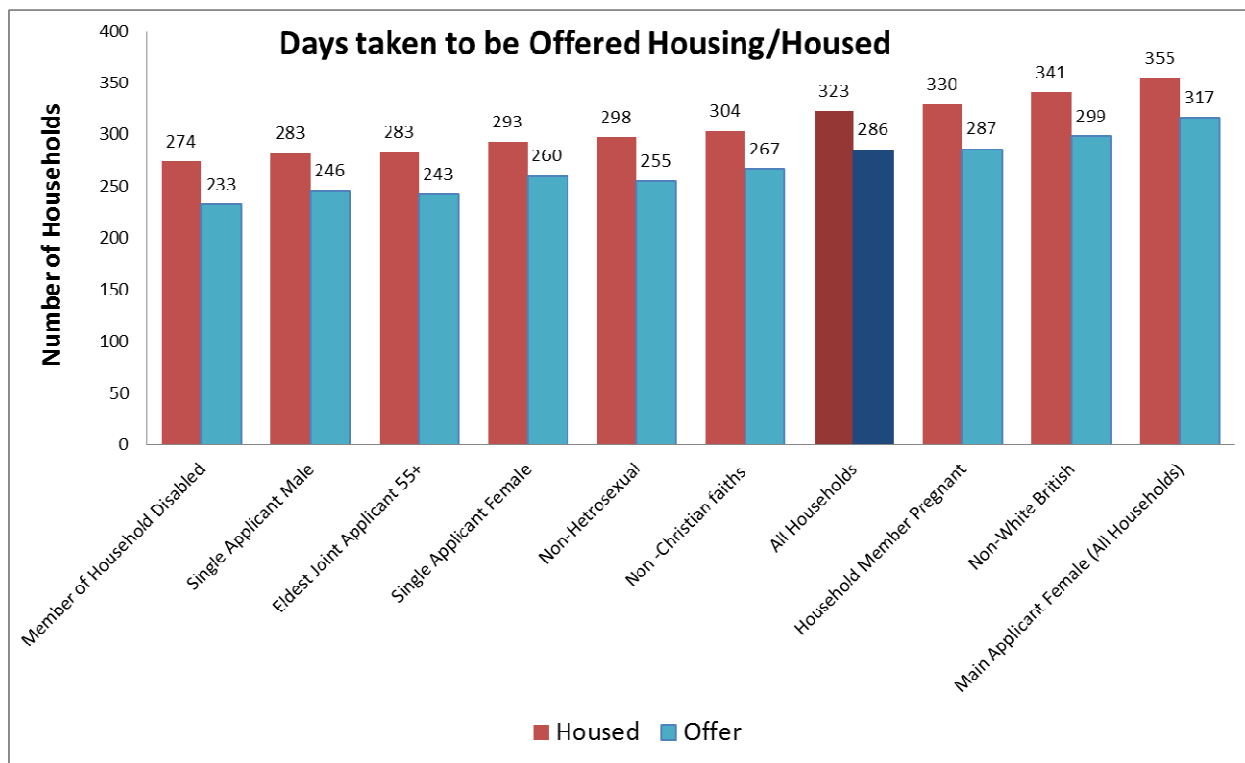
The current housing register breakdown for customers living in Chorley is:

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Total
Bedroom Need						
1 bed	14	75	60	126	335	610
2 bed	5	14	40	141	173	373
3 bed	2	7	10	44	42	105
4 bed	0	4	5	13	18	40
Total	21	100	115	324	568	1,128

The total number on the housing register is currently 1128. This figure includes all the applications currently held by all the partners (i.e. including those held by both the Council and also all of the RPs). As of the 14th February 2014, 54% of the customers on the register had completed the review process and as part of that, had their local connection verified. Chorley Council has completed all of its applications, resulting in a 67% reduction of applicants on the register. Whilst it is expected that a majority of these customers will have a local connection to Chorley, there remains some work to be done by RPs to complete this exercise and this is being undertaken at the time of writing.

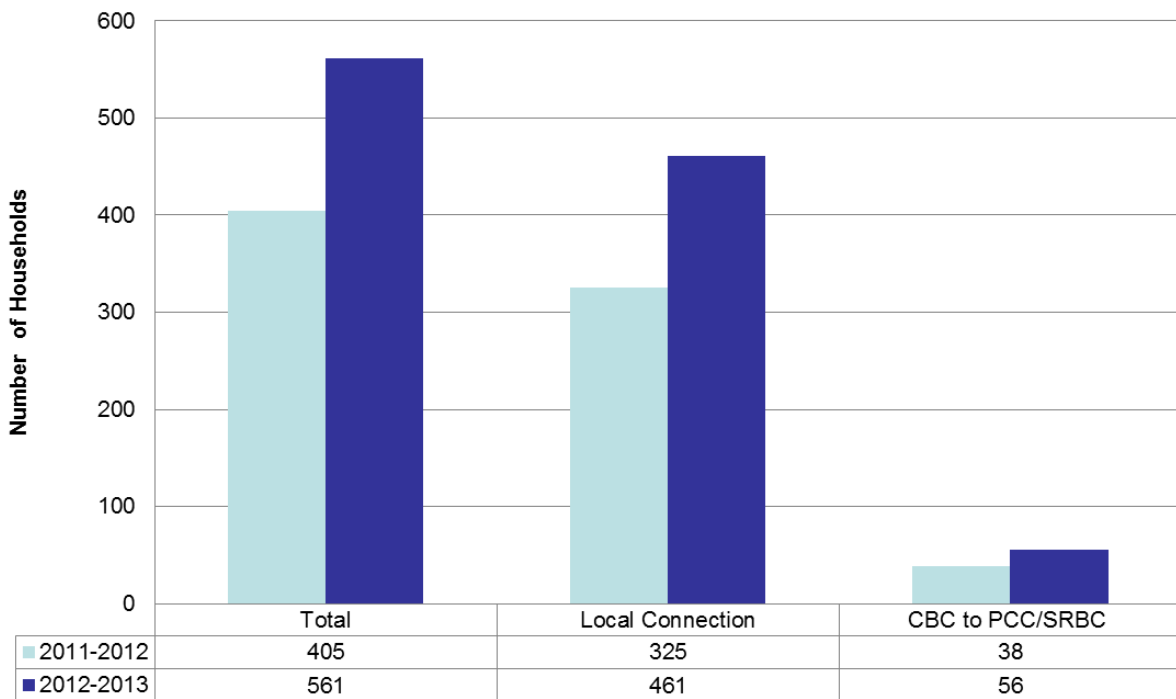
Days on Select Move before Housed

The Task Group were interested in finding out more about the length of time customers wait to be allocated a property. The figure below shows the number of days waited by customer profile and overall these figures are considered to be reasonable, given the size of the register and the relative size of the social rented stock in Chorley.



Chorley Select Move Lets

This table below illustrates the number of lets made in the past two years and illustrates the decline in net migration to Chorley of those without a local connection to the borough. Net inward migration was confirmed as 10.4% in 11/12 and 7.8% in 12/13. It was thus falling even before recent further changes in policy to ensure local connection.



4. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Group were provided with 3 presentations from officers:

- 1) An overview of the Select move system, what Choice based lettings is and how it works,
- 2) Presentation of Statistical Information requested by members, including bidding behaviour, customer profiles and inward migration.
- 3) Findings of the Select Move Customer survey.

The evidence considered included statistical breakdown of those people registered on the Select Move lettings scheme, including information about those with the following characteristics:

- Ethnic origin of household
- Faith of main applicant
- Sexuality of main applicant
- Gender of Main & Sole Applicant
- Rural Households
- Ages of Oldest Joint applicant By Household size
- Member of the Household Pregnant
- Member of Household has Disability

Information was provided as to who has been on Select Move the longest and analysis of bidding history and analysis of bidding activity was provided.

Analysis of the total number of lettings made prior to the introduction of Select Move in comparison to after Select Move was implemented.

The levels of migration were also reviewed, including the percentage of net migration (i.e. the inward migration of customers securing property in Chorley without a local connection to Chorley minus those with a local connection moving outwards to Preston or South Ribble).

Presentation

The Task Group received presentations from:

Officers:

Michael Coogan, Principal Strategic Housing Officer
Stuart Dewhurst, Housing Team Leader (Options)
Zoe Whiteside, Head of Housing

The RT Hon Lindsay Hoyle MP for Chorley

Lindsay Hoyle MP provided written evidence to the Task Group, drawing on his contacts with his constituents.

Registered Providers

The 5 RPs with the largest stockholding in Chorley were invited to attend to meet with members from the Task Group on 7th November 2013. The following representatives attended:

Richard Houghton	Chorley Community Housing
Rachel Page	New Progress Housing Association
Steven Amos	Places for People Housing Association
Vicky Young	Contour Housing Association

Apologies were received from Paul Spencer, Housing Manager North West, Accent Housing Group.

The RPs were provided with an overview of the aims of the overview and scrutiny review in addition to a number of questions in advance. This was to enable the RPS to prepare and also stimulate debate at the meeting. The questions explored:

- provision for front line service for Select Move customers,
- what steps they were taking to improve the customer experience,
- processes and procedures regarding undertaking pre letting assessments and skipping of customers on the shortlists,
- Measures being put in place to respond to under occupancy,
- What steps are taken before letting to ensure properties are let a good standard.

Resident Representations: Customer Survey

A Customer Satisfaction survey was undertaken in order to obtain feedback on the processes relating to the Select Move lettings scheme. The survey was posted out, with pre-paid envelopes to 1790 households in Chorley, comprising of 1,442 active applicants and a further 348 customers who had successfully secured a new home using the Select Move system.

The survey questions were devised from discussions at the Task Group meeting and were posted the week commencing 18th November 2013 and the final ones received in January 2014.

The first survey to existing housing applicants generated a return of 16.7% (228 responses) and the second survey to those who had secured housing in the past 6 months generated a return of 18.9% (71 responses). The survey responses were collated and the findings studied.

Resident Representations: Customer Drop In

In addition to the customer survey, members of the Task Group were keen to meet customers in person, to give them an opportunity to hear from customers about their experiences and concerns, and also any ideas they had about making the service better.

The survey had asked customers if they would be interested to attend a drop in session and subsequently 38 customers indicated they would. Therefore as this was a greater level of interest than anticipation, it was decided to randomly select 50% of the customers to invite to meet the Task Group members, and the remaining 50% were contacted to thank them for their offer of assistance and provide an opportunity to share their thoughts or comments about letters of invitation were sent to these customers and 5 customers attended.

The drop in session was structured, with two panels of Task Group members established to meet the customers, and each panel supported by an officer. There was also a member of the Housing Options team available to provide individual advice and support to any customers asking specifically about their application. These discussions took place outside of the panels.

The drop-in sessions were very successful and enabled productive and informative discussions between customers and the Task Group members to take place.

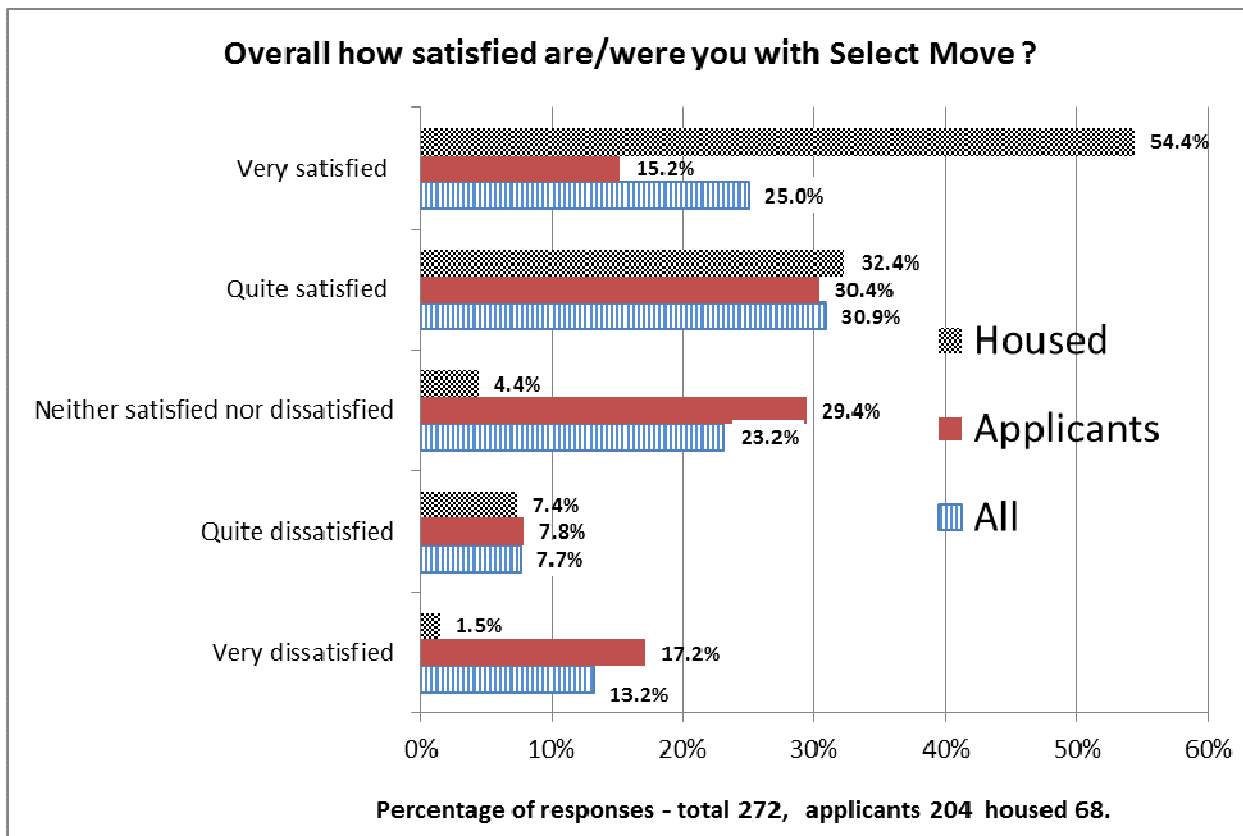
6. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Customer Satisfaction

It was found that overall satisfaction with Select Move was good, with 25% of all customers saying that they were 'very satisfied' with the scheme, the figure increasing to 54.4% for those who were successfully housed in the past 6 months.

The majority of customers are satisfied (55.9%) with Select Move and satisfaction in those housed (86.8%) is almost double that of current applicants (45.6%). Over 7 in ten respondents preferred Select Move to the previous system and customers housed were more likely to bid frequently than those on the waiting list, and in total 68.7% of respondents bid at least every month. 70.0% of those housed managed this within a year, with 34.3% being housed within 4 months of applying.

Lack of bidding was partially down to internet access/ability and with a preference for dealing with people, but it is also down to personal choice. There was an overwhelming response to the question we asked customers about returning to the previous system of allocations, with 82.6% saying 'no'.



Moving into a property

The task group examined each of the respective RPs processes for letting a property to a new tenant, including any assistance with decorating materials, choice of finishes when works are being undertaken (such as new kitchens or bathrooms) and generally customers views about the standard of accommodation at relet.

It was found that there were not major concerns about property standard, with 70% of customers satisfied with the condition of their property at letting. However, there was a variation in what RPs offered prospective tenants with regard to decorating material. Where a property is in a bad state, it would nearly always be decorated by the RP before handover but in the case of some properties needing some redecoration some RPS would give an allowance to new tenants, usually at a level well below the cost of a decent job.

Recommendation: That each RP review their processes for handing over properties at relet stage, including recording both the time taken to prepare a property ready for a let and also the level of assistance for new tenants. That all RPs will look to raise their offer to the same standard of the best across all providers.

Recommendation: That each RP review the provision for a decoration allowance for new tenants and review its level, increasing it to ensure it where necessary to ensure it is sufficient.

Accessibility of Select Move

Accessibility to the scheme was reviewed and it was concluded that the partnership as a whole needs to be more proactive in supporting customers to develop skills in using computer technology. Whilst 68.4% of respondents found Select Move easy to use, there is a minority who are not bidding regularly and who told us they were unable to bid or access the website.

Of our survey respondents, 42.9% of all respondents said that they bid every week and interestingly, 72.1% of those customers who had been housed in the last 6 months had bid every week. However, there is evidence to suggest that a sizeable proportion of customers on Select Move do not bid regularly, with the survey finding 21% of current applicants had never bid.

It was concluded that customers valued the information presented on the Select Move system and this includes both advert text and also photographs of the available properties. Of our survey respondents, 67.2% stated that a photograph on the advert was 'very important'. It was also found that customers preferred the adverts to state specifically and clearly if the property was restricted to a particular group or if the property was to be directly matched to a customer.

The survey suggested that a proportion of customers do not use Select Move online, either because they do not have access to a computer (28.3%) or because they do not know how to use a computer (26.7%). Of the customers who responded to the survey, 13.9% said that they were unable to bid or did not know how to.

Recommendation: 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.

Recommendation: 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.

Recommendation: That the partnership considers undertaking a process of proactive marketing to those who are not 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.

Recommendation: That the RPs within the partnership are encouraged to provide more detail 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.

Recommendation: 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.

Recommendation: That the RPs 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 of the scheme.

Local connection

The task group found that the number of steps have been taken in order to minimise the net migration of those without a local connection, into Chorley properties. These measures have proved successful and the very recent review of the Select Move Allocations policy will further enhance this.

Recommendation: That there continues to be regular monitoring by the Council of the level of net migration into Chorley by the council, to ensure the new policy achieves the overall aims of prioritising Chorley properties for those with a connection to the borough.

Affordability

The national welfare reform agenda and the introduction of changes for those claiming benefits has led RPs to consider what the costs of renting a home are and if prospective tenants can afford properties they are bidding for.

Understandably, RPs are concerned about the future viability of their business and so appear to be taking steps to ensure customers are able to meet the costs of running their new home. However, given the legal responsibilities placed on the local authorities under the homelessness and housing legislation (and these duties do not apply to RPs), it is in the Council's interest to work with RPs and ensure that any future policy does not prevent certain customers, such as those who are homeless or who have high priority for housing, from accessing accommodation.

The latest Statutory Guidance for social housing confirms that social housing is to go to those in 'greatest housing need' and therefore whilst RPs may seek to obtain a balance in their communities, including providing social housing for working households, this must not be to the detriment of those who are in housing need and whom need support in order to access training and employment.

Recommendation: That the partnership ensures that any affordability policies or tests are consistent across RPs and that these policies do not provide blanket exclusions for certain groups of customers.

Recommendation: That the partnership ensures that as part of any affordability policy there are provisions available which will help customers to improve their circumstances in order to pass any assessment of affordability threshold in order to secure a property and that these are consistently available across all RPs.

Recommendation: That the Council continues to work with RPs in order to enable new affordable housing of the right type and tenure is available so local housing need is met.

7. CONCLUSION

The Task Group was established to investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs of, and satisfaction levels of applicants, by reviewing:

- a) The application processes
- b) The allocation processes
- c) The standard of allocated properties

This work was undertaken with the first desired objective to ascertain if Select Move is a choice based lettings service that meets the needs of Chorley residents. The Task Group panel conclude that Select Move does largely meet our customers' needs, as satisfaction is good, allocations are being made within a period we considered to be reasonable and also the majority of customers when asked if we 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 are prefer to wait for a particular street or area until they place a bid on a property).

There are some areas we need to improve and with the refreshed Allocations Policy and also the forthcoming system upgrade which promises to improve the customer interface and experience; Select Move will increasingly meet need. Further, the introduction of a smartphone friendly version of the website will further enhance access for customers.

Our second desired outcome was to identify areas of improvement on condition of property at handover and whilst we revealed no major concerns, there are some suggestions for our partners which will improve the customer experience.

Our third desired outcome was to reduce waiting times and lists and the policy refresh work which is currently underway at time of writing, in ensuring that qualification and local connection are fully assessed and verified and indications are that this will result in a distillation of the housing register. The new local connection provisions within the revised policy will ensure those with a local connection to Chorley are giving priority for all available homes in Chorley, minimising the levels of inward migration. This is important particularly given the volume of new affordable housing developments in Chorley.

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Allocation

The letting of a social property by a Registered Provider or Council

Nomination

The putting forward of a household in housing need by the Council to be housed by a Registered Provider

Allocation policy

The policy which determines how social properties are let.

Skipping

The act of passing over a bidding applicant to a lower priority applicant on a short list

Affordability

Determines whether a household has sufficient means to meet its housing needs

Migration

The movement of a household from one Council area to another

Abritas

The company which develops and supplies the software Select Move uses along with the majority of similar Choice Based Letting Systems nationwide

Choice Based Lettings

The method of letting social properties through a proactive 'bidding' system to allow customer choice, rather than waiting to be allocated a property on a traditional waiting list

Registered Provider

A provider of social housing who is registered with the Homes and Communities Agency including the all major Housing Associations

Chorley Council



Select Move Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme

Common Allocation Scheme 2018

1. Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

This document represents the social housing allocation scheme for

Chorley Borough Council

Preston City Council

South Ribble Borough Council

The following Registered Providers

Accent Foundation

Chorley Community Housing

Jigsaw Homes

Onward Homes

Great Places

Your Housing Group

Progress Housing Group

Places for People

Sage Housing

The Registered Providers will use this scheme to allocate a minimum of 75% of its true voids in a financial year, and each Provider may use their discretion to advertise and allocate the other 25% using alternative platforms. In order to allow the Local Authority to monitor the number and type of properties allocated within their area, Registered Providers will use the Select Move IT system as the reporting mechanism for recording all allocations regardless of which platform they have used.

When calculating the number of voids no account shall be taken of:

- Mutual Exchanges
- Successions
- Decants to facilitate major works or improvements, where the tenant will be returning

The properties advertised through this policy will be a cross section of the quality, location, size, and type of property owned or managed by the Registered Provider that becomes vacant throughout the year. RSLs will work with the relevant Local Authority if a more specific type and size of property is required in order for the Local Authority to more effectively discharge their duty.

Once the property is placed on Select Move the Registered Provider cannot advertise it on another platform until it has completed one full advertising cycle and

the shortlist exhausted. The Registered Provider can then advertise and allocate the property through any platform. The local authorities and housing associations listed above have signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to this scheme under a partnership arrangement to operate the Select Move sub- regional choice based lettings scheme.

Registered Providers with housing in the Chorley, Preston and South Ribble areas who are not Select Move partners will be subject to local nomination agreements with local authorities to allocate properties.

1.2 Legal Framework

Local authorities are required by the Housing Act 1996 to have a published allocation scheme and this document takes into account the requirements of the Act as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011. The scheme incorporates the 2012 regulations concerning armed forces personnel and the 2015 Right to Move regulations and guidance and the Allocation Codes of Guidance 2012 & 2013. The policy has also been developed to remain compatible with other related legislation and guidance, the details of which can be found at Appendix G This scheme will be revised as necessary to incorporate any subsequent legislation and statutory guidance.

1.3 Governance

The Memorandum of Understanding provides that the scheme is managed by a Steering Group that meets at least 6 times a year. An Operational Group meets at least 6 times a year which reports on operational and performance matters.

1.4 Select Move website

A shared web based IT system, (the Select Move website) allows the partners to operate a common housing application form, housing register and allocations policy.

The Select Move website provides an online housing application form, with registered applicants able to place expressions of interest or bids for properties advertised on the website.

The website provides other services including self -service housing advice, a mutual exchange service, private rented and low cost home ownership information.

1.5 Policy Statement

The aim of the scheme is to ensure that homes are allocated to eligible and qualifying applicants in a fair, consistent and accountable manner in accordance with legislation and guidance.

Homes will be allocated to applicants after taking into account the following: their housing needs and choices, their financial situation and ability to manage a tenancy, the local community and the locality whilst ensuring the best use of housing stock.

An allocation of housing is defined as the nomination of any person to be a secure, introductory assured of fixed term tenant provided by a Local Housing Authority or Registered Provider.

Allocations also include where a tenant is applying for a transfer from one Select Move partner to another. In this case the tenant must have complied with the terms of their tenancy to qualify to join the register.

1.6 Equality Statement

The Partners are committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination in relation to their service provision and seek to promote social inclusion. Applicants will not be discriminated against when seeking or accessing accommodation in accordance with the general equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Partners will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access the Select Move services (subject to eligibility legislation) and they will ensure that they are responsive to any special needs of service users.

1.7 Consultation

Any significant changes to this policy will be approved by the relevant Board, Committee or portfolio holder for each participating local authority and by the relevant decision-making bodies of the Registered Providers as appropriate. Any significant changes will also be subject to consultation with relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations and tenant representatives and applicants to the scheme. The Select Move Steering Group shall be responsible for determining whether any proposed changes are significant and should be the subject of consultation.

2. Applying to Select Move

2.1 Who can apply to join Select Move?

Housing legislation requires that applicants are assessed to determine whether by law they are eligible for an allocation of accommodation. If the applicant is eligible, their application is assessed against the Select Move qualifying criteria. The Select Move partner receiving the application will be responsible for investigating and determining the application, although transfer applications will be passed to the tenant's landlord for assessment. Applicants are notified in writing of the outcome of their application. Current tenants of the partners will need to have been a tenant for a minimum of 12 months before being allowed to join the register unless there are exceptional circumstances.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) states that the following types of household are not eligible for a housing allocation and therefore cannot join the Select Move scheme.

- Persons from abroad who the relevant Secretary of State has deemed ineligible for an allocation of social housing.
- Persons subject to immigration control.
- Other persons from abroad who are ineligible as a result of legislation.

Where there are two or more applicants and one or more is classed as ineligible a tenancy will only be granted to the eligible applicant(s).

2.3 Qualifying Criteria

An applicant will qualify to join the Select Move scheme if they are;

An eligible person and

Aged 16 or over. Persons aged 16 or 17 can qualify to join the scheme but will not be made an offer of accommodation without a relevant support package being in place that is agreed where necessary between the Local Authority and the Registered Provider.

All applicants must demonstrate that they have a local connection by meeting one of the following criteria. Local Connection will only be awarded to the specific area of Chorley, Preston and/or South Ribble where they can evidence that they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have lived 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years continuously in the specific Local Authority area.
- The applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have parents, children or adult siblings who currently permanently reside in the specific Local Authority area and have done so continuously for at least 5 years.
- The applicant is currently employed in the specific Local Authority area. Employment is work that is not temporary or seasonal, is for at least 16 hours per week and has been continual for at least 6 months and the applicant must be working at the point an offer of a tenancy is made. (banding is global)
- The applicant is currently making a positive community contribution or undertaken voluntary work in the specific Local Authority area for at least 10 hours per month over the last 12 months.
- The applicant needs to give or receive long term care, which is effective and genuine to another person who permanently resides within the specific Local Authority area and who could not otherwise manage without the care provided

and there is a need for the applicant to move into the area in order to facilitate the provision of such long term care.

- The applicant at the time of the application is serving in or has formerly served in the UK regular forces within the last 5 years.
- The applicant has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the UK Government following the death of that persons spouse or civil partner who has served in the UK regular forces and their death was attributable wholly or partly to that service.
- The applicant at the time of the application is serving in or has formerly served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable wholly or partly to that service.
- Applicants/households that cannot demonstrate a local connection but have an exception welfare need will be accepted on to the scheme e.g. harassment, domestic abuse, witness protection etc.
- Applicants under the Right to Move Regulations i.e. social tenants moving into the area to take up employment. See Appendix E.

3. Non- Qualifying Criteria

Applicants/household will not qualify to join the Select Move scheme if one of the following applies:

3.1 Financial circumstances

The applicant/household is a current tenant of a Registered Provider and has any outstanding housing related debt.

The applicant/household have a housing related debt such as rent arrears, repairs recharges, leasehold service charges and/or sundry debts of £1000.01 or more that can be proven by a social and/or private landlord. Applicants/household with housing related debts of below £1000 will qualify provided that they have made and maintained a repayment plan in accordance with the criteria below:

- Housing related debt under £500, an agreed repayment plan must have been maintained for a minimum of 3 months before they can register.
- Housing related debt between £500.01 and £1000 an agreed repayment plan must have been maintained for a minimum of 6 months and the debt must be reduce to under £500 before they can register.
- Payments must be maintained under the plan before any offer of accommodation is made.

The applicant or household member is an owner occupier or has equity in a property (whether or not the property is located in the UK). Consideration of applications from owner occupiers will be given where the Local Authority has a statutory duty to assist e.g. homelessness or where the applicants housing needs can only be met by social housing e.g. sheltered housing required.

The applicant's household has a gross annual income (including benefit income) of £60,000 or more and/or have savings or assets greater than £30,000. These amounts will be reviewed annually.

The applicant's/household financial and personal circumstances are such that they do not qualify for charitable housing assistance from a partner Registered Provider that has charitable rules and objectives.

3.2 Support needs

If the applicants care and support needs are assessed by a partner organisation as being such that an individual's specific needs cannot be met in general or sheltered accommodation they will not qualify for accommodation.

3.3 Unacceptable behaviour

Certain behaviour and/or convictions of the applicant(s) or household member may result in them being disqualified from joining the scheme. Examples include where the applicant or household member has:

Unspent criminal convictions that make them unsuitable to be a tenant due to the threat or risk they pose. This will be determined by the information provided by probation, police intelligence and evidence available via the approved protocol.

Engaged in anti-social behaviour such that action has been taken, or could have been taken against that person such as a Civil Injunction, Criminal Behaviour Order, Community Protection Notice, Demotion Order or Possession Order.

Previously been evicted by a Select Move partner and the reasons for the eviction whether behavioural or financial are still considered a risk to the landlord. The applicant/household member has the right to appeal this decision. Appeals will be considered by the Registered Provider that carried out the eviction. Any further appeals will not be considered within 12 months.

Been convicted of using or allowing current or former accommodation to be used for illegal and/or immoral purposes.

Been responsible for neglecting, damaging or abandoning a previous property.

Been responsible for providing false information in connection with making a housing application and or obtaining a tenancy.

Been responsible for tenancy fraud.

When assessing whether the behaviour of the applicant or household member is serious enough to disqualify them from joining the scheme, the following matters will be considered by the Select Move partner assessing the application.

Has the applicant or household member behaved in such a way that they are considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant of a Select Move partner and at the time of the application is the applicant or household member still considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant of a Select Move partner by reason of their behaviour or the behaviour of any person named on the application and if the behaviour is serious enough to entitle a landlord to commence legal proceeding and/or the behaviour poses a serious risk to staff of any Select Move partner, tenants of a Select Move partner or the local community.

Partners will however consider the circumstances of each case individually and applicants/household members are entitled to present any mitigating circumstances and information for consideration. Consideration will also be given to those applicants/household members with housing related debt and/ or convictions where there is a statutory duty to assist by the Local Authority. These applicants will be required to demonstrate a commitment to reducing the debt and the maintenance of a repayment plan or improved behaviour or reduced risk.

3.4. Applicants who do not qualify

An applicant who is eligible but does not qualify for accommodation under this scheme can apply to the partner landlord of their choice to be placed on the Open Property Register (OPR) for low demand properties. OPR properties are not subject to this scheme. Please see Appendix F for the OPR policy.

4. Application assessment

4.1 Verification

The registration process will involve verification checks and assessments carried out by the partners to the scheme at application and offer stage, and it will be the applicant's responsibility to provide any evidence that is requested. This can include;

Evidence of eligibility for all persons named on the application or added to the application and any of the following will be required as evidence for these persons current passport, current national identify card, photo driving licence, birth certificate and/or current benefit award letter dated within the last 3 months. Proof of child Benefit is required for children.

Affordability assessments will be undertaken on applicants and their households to determine ability to sustain a tenancy financially. If a tenancy is deemed to be unaffordable, Select Move Partners are committed to providing information/advice and sign posting to alternative options to support the applicant/household to obtain accommodation. The outcome of the affordability assessment will not prevent the application from being made active, however it may preclude an offer being made.

Evidence from the applicant that they have a local connection to at least one of the Local Authority areas of Chorley, Preston or South Ribble.

Obtaining references from the applicant/households current/former landlords.

Requesting information about the applicant/households current or former housing related debts.

Requesting information about the applicant/households current or previous anti-social behaviour.

Requesting information about an applicant/households offending history, for example from the Probation Service further to disclosure about offending.

Undertaking inspections of the current property to ensure that the conditions of the tenancy are being complied with and the details given on the application form are correct.

Evidence of successful completion of pre-tenancy training if a request has been made for the applicant to complete this training.

Until the verification checks have been completed and accepted as satisfactory by a partner to the scheme an applicant will not be able to register an expression of interest in a property.

4.2 Child Access

If an applicant has access to children, they will need to provide evidence such as a copy of an access agreement, court order, custody or residence order or details of their ex-partner where appropriate. In some areas applicants may only be offered certain property types to make best use of the available housing stock and any offer must be an affordable option.

4.3 False or withheld information

It is a criminal offence for any applicant to knowingly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their application. An offence may be committed if an applicant knowingly gives false information or knowingly withholds information which has reasonably been requested at any stage of the application process. An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf, or at his or her instigation. In these circumstances action may be taken with regard to the tenancy awarded and/or their application.

4.4 Change of circumstances

Applicants are required to notify a partner immediately of any change in circumstances – for example:

A change of address for themselves or any person on the application;

Any additional person to be added to the application;

If any member of family or any other person on the application is no longer a party to the application.

Any other change that might affect eligibility, qualification, banding or effective date.

Where the applicant has not notified a partner of a change of circumstances and this would have affected eligibility, qualification, banding or effective date any other partner will be entitled to:

Withdraw an offer of accommodation

Skip the application during any short listing process

Close the application

Put the application in pending until all relevant information is received.

4.5 Deliberately worsening or changing circumstances

Where an applicant has deliberately worsened or changed their circumstances to gain additional priority or gain a more favourable effective date or gain eligibility or qualification, they will be assessed on their circumstances before their situation changed.

Examples of these circumstances include:

An applicant has moved from suitable accommodation which was reasonable for them to continue to reside in to accommodation that is less suitable;

An owner –occupier who has unnecessarily transferred their home to another person within the last five years from the date of their application, unless such transfer was necessary in order for that person to continue to occupy their home

An applicant who has unnecessarily dispersed, transferred or deprived themselves of assets or money which could have been used to secure suitable accommodation within the last five years from the date of their application;

An applicant who has moved family members or other persons into their home from accommodation suitable for their needs such that the applicant's home is now unsuitable.

Priority will not be awarded to applicants who have moved into a property unless there has been a change in circumstances

4.6 Priority

Priority for accommodation will be awarded in accordance with the following criteria;

Bedroom need. Households whose minimum bedroom need matches the bedroom size of the property will be prioritised first.

Banding. The Select Move scheme operates with five bands A to E. Band A is the highest priority and band E being the lowest.

Local connection. Those with a local connection to the local authority area of the advertised property will be given preference in each band.

Effective date. An effective date will be used to determine an applicant’s position within the band after local connection has been taken into account.

Appendix A provides further detail of the shortlisting criteria.

4.7 Determining the Effective Date

The following criteria will be used to determine the effective date;

For a new applicant the effective date will be the date the application is received by a Select Move partner.

If an applicant is subsequently awarded a higher band priority the banding date will be the date the higher band priority was awarded.

If an applicant is subsequently awarded a lower band the banding date will be the date the application was accepted onto the Select Move scheme – i.e. the original effective date.

If an applicant is given priority because they are moving on from supported housing the effective date will be the date they moved into the supported housing.

For qualifying and eligible current or former UK service personnel or their spouse or civil partner who are in urgent housing need (Band A – C) as determined by a local authority partner, the effective date will be backdated to equal their total period of service in the UK armed forces (or the service of spouse or civil partner).

Where the applicant becomes homeless unintentionally within 2 years of accepting a homeless duty private sector tenancy the effective date will be the date of the new application.

5. Global and local banding categories

Every application is awarded a local and global band, these may differ. The local band will reflect the priority awarded for housing within the applicant’s local authority area only. The global band reflects the priority awarded across the partnership. Priority banding will only be awarded where an applicant’s circumstances are different from when they took their tenancy.

5.1 The banding scheme

BAND A: Urgent Need Band	
Medical/Welfare Grounds GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An immediate life threatening or progressive condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would solve or alleviate that medical condition or make it significantly easier to manage.- To be agreed by a manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the household seeking accommodation cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation accommodation until suitable housing is provided and the household had settled accommodation in a Select Move partner's area prior to hospital admission. <p>A member of the household is elderly, disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future and re-housing would enable that person to remain living at home. To be agreed by a manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The household seeking accommodation has welfare needs so severe that the protection of vulnerable adults or children is only possible if the household were to move to a new home and where the present circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place household members at risk, or in need of residential care unless re-housing is offered.
<p>Care Leavers</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>Care leavers who are threatened with homelessness and who will continue to be supported by their local Leaving Care Team assessed through the agreed protocol. Applicants are awarded this category in accordance with protocols between the Council's Housing and County Council Children Services Department. An applicant must be a former relevant child as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002. They must have vulnerability and urgent housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing.</p>
<p>To release an Adapted property</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a partner tenant does not require a specially adapted property for disabled use, and there is demand for its use.
<p>Exceptional need to move, determined by partners within the agreed procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant problems associated with the applicants' occupation of a dwelling in the social or private rented

<p>Domestic Violence/MARAC, Racial, Homophobic or Transgender Harassment, witness or child protection, management transfers</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>sector and there is a high risk to the tenant or their family’s safety if they remain in the dwelling/area. For social housing tenants transfers will be to properties of the same size and type where required, but locations or areas are likely to change. A list of cases that could qualify is detailed in the policy. See appendix D.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency need to move due to exceptional circumstances where there is high risk to the tenant or family’s safety if they remain in the dwelling/area. • Urgent management transfer cases accepted by a participating landlord or waiting list cases accepted by a participating local authority. • Applicants who have been assessed by the LA as being owed the homelessness relief duty and who are vulnerable as a result of being victims of violence or harassment • Applicants who have been assessed by the LA as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need as a result of being victims of violence or harassment
<p>Statutory overcrowded</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that are statutory overcrowded as defined by the Housing Act 1985
<p>Private Sector properties unsanitary or unfit.</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A private sector property either owned or rented where a statutory notice has been issued by the Environmental Health Department that an unfit property is to be demolished under the Housing Act 2004 • They are a private sector tenant and the Council has decided that the property poses a Category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety Fitness Rating and the Council are satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months and as a result continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a risk to the applicant’s health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of the roof or have living conditions which are

	a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period.
Supported Accommodation GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants leaving supported accommodation and have been assessed by the support provider as ready for independent living via the approved route in each partner local authority and the resulting vacancy can be used by someone else who needs the support.
Homeless households owed a full homeless duty under section 193(2) or 195(2) Housing Act 1996 LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory homeless cases accepted by local authorities within the scheme.

Band B:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Overcrowded GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An applicant who needs to move due to severe overcrowding – short by 2 or more bedrooms in accordance with the criteria in Appendix A Table 2 .
Medical mobility cases / Medical grounds GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An applicant who have an urgent need to move on medical grounds because their current home is having a severe adverse effect on the health of a member of the household. The household includes a child or young person with a long term disability or learning difficulty, who needs to access specialist education or training facilities and cannot do so from their present home. Supporting evidence must be provided.
Essential Care LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The household includes a person who receives/provides or needs to receive/provide essential long term care to someone in any part of the Select Move area and they cannot deliver that care effectively from their current location. Approved foster carers and adopters who require larger accommodation on the recommendation of children’s services.

<p>Applicants owed a prevention or relief duty – Band B priority to be awarded by the LA after a 3 month period with waiting time continued</p> <p>LOCAL</p>	<p>Applicants owed a Prevention or Relief duty who are engaging with the Local Authority and their personal housing plan and who are actively bidding</p>
<p>Applicants who are owed a relief duty by the LA and are entitled to accommodation under section 188 of the Housing Act - priority to be awarded immediately that the section 188 duty arises with waiting time continued</p> <p>LOCAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants that the LA assess are owed a relief duty and are entitled to temporary accommodation
<p>Right to Move Local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing social tenants needing to move into the Select Move area for employment reasons see Appendix E

<p>Band C</p>	
<p>Applicants who are owed the homelessness prevention or relief duty – priority kept under review for a 3 month period</p>	<p>Applicants who the LA assess as being owed the homelessness prevention or relief duty. Band B to be awarded with waiting time continued after a 3 month period with waiting time continued subject to engagement with the LA and personal housing plan and actively bidding on properties</p>
<p>Hardship and welfare LOCAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An applicant who needs to move to a particular locality and otherwise would suffer significant hardship to themselves or to a member of their household
<p>Under Occupying GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tenant of a partner housing association under occupying family housing by two or more bedrooms in

	<p>accordance with the criteria in Appendix A Table 2 or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tenant of a partner housing association seeking a move to non-family housing that will free up a house to enable use by a family.
<p>Applicants with dependent children living in accommodation that lacks level access</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An applicant without ground level access or in upper floor accommodation who lives with at least one child under the age of 3, including pregnant women once their Mat B1 has been received.
<p>Applicants living in accommodation that lacks basic facilities</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants without access to any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bath or Shower 2. A toilet 3. Cooking facilities 4. Running hot water supplies Electric/gas needed for essential activities <p>Subject to verification by the local authority.</p>

Band D	
<p>Applicants not assessed as being owed a reasonable preference but who meet the partnership positive community criteria</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An applicant employed or undertaking training within the borough to which they are applying. • An applicant that can demonstrate a contribution to the local community such as voluntary work. This could be specific to the area where the work takes place or could be positive work on an estate. • An applicant with a family connection to the specific area which is required due to giving or receiving care or specific support purposes. •
<p>Under-Occupancy</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner tenants who are under-occupying
<p>Households Over-Occupying by 1 bedroom.</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households over-occupying by 1 bedroom according to the bedroom standard as detailed in Appendix A Table 2 regardless of household type or landlord.

E Band	
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No Housing Need GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants that do not qualify for additional preference but would like to move to alternative accommodation.
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6. Allocations and lettings

6.1 Quota system

When advertising properties on the Select Move scheme, partners will use the following quota system:

Band A	40%
Band B	30%
Band C	20%
Band D	10%
Band E	0%

6.2 Advertising

Properties will be advertised as and when notice is received and therefore will be uploaded at anytime between a Monday and Friday to the website.

Each listed property will have a closing date within which the customers will need to register their bid.

Large family homes of 4 bedrooms or more including 3 bed parlour homes, bungalows and newly built homes will be advertised for a minimum of one week including weekends and bank holidays as will any properties with adaptations.

All other properties advertised on Select Move will be advertised for a minimum of 3 days including weekends and bank holidays.

6.3 Direct matches

A direct match will occur where a property has been identified for a particular applicant and which has been approved by a senior manager in the partner organisation making the match.

Direct matches are used in exceptional circumstances for emergency re-housing such as fire, flood, major incident, urgent major repairs, witness protection, child protection, serious domestic abuse or other exceptional housing management reason. Instances of direct matching will be monitored by the Operational Group for compliance with the shortlisting and offers procedure.

6.4 Numbers of expressions of interest, numbers of offers and other restrictions

An applicant who has been accepted as statutory homeless by a Local Authority will receive one suitable offer of accommodation which can be from the social rented or private rented sector as determined by the local authority. If a homeless applicant refuses one suitable offer of accommodation then the applicant will lose their reasonable preference banding and will be placed in a lower band to reflect their housing needs. The Local Authority will have no further legal duty to provide accommodation. If an applicant wishes to request a review in relation to the suitability of an offer or their status as a homeless applicant they must make an application to the relevant local authority.

Applicants awarded band A or band B priority may lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they, or their proxy, bid and the property is considered suitable taking into account:

The size of the property

The physical access to the property and the internal layout

The facilities provided

The location of the property and

It was accurately described on the Select Move advertisement.

Any applicants in band A and band B will have their application reviewed every 10 weeks to ensure that the applicant is expressing an interest on suitable vacancies advertised. . Where the applicant fails to express an interest their band placement will be formally reviewed and in appropriate circumstances expressions of interest will be placed on their behalf. Where priority has been awarded by the Local Authority under homelessness duties the Local Authority will have the discretion to review the application weekly. This includes applicants awarded Band C priority by The Local Authority

6.5 Offers of accommodation

An offer of accommodation can be made by telephone, e-mail or in writing subject to the contact details on the application form.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their personal contact details are kept up to date and that they notify Select Move of any planned holidays or expected absences.

If an applicant does not reply to an offer within 2 working days, or 24 hours if the property is ready to let, the offer will be deemed to be withdrawn. A further attempt will be made to contact the applicant within 10 working days to determine whether they wish to remain on the list. If there is still no response, the application will be closed.

If an applicant banded A to C by a Local Authority fails to reply the relevant Local Authority will be informed in order that further efforts can be made to contact the applicant.

6.6 Planning restrictions

Planning requirements may restrict which applicants can be considered for a particular property e.g. must live in a particular area etc. These restrictions will be clearly set out in the advertisement by the partner and short listing decisions will be only be made by the partner in accordance with the requirements of the planning consent.

6.7 Local Lettings Policies

Select Move partners may draw up local lettings policies that are aimed at creating and maintaining sustainable communities which are: time limited and consulted with the Local Authority and stakeholders and agreed with the Steering Group.

Applicants may as part of a local lettings plan be required to attend training to demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy. Where training is identified as being necessary, the applicant will need to successfully complete this training before an offer of accommodation is confirmed.

Local lettings policies must be formally publicised by the partner implementing the policy and must also carry out an equality impact assessment.

6.8 High risk ex-offenders

Applicants who are considered by relevant agencies as high risk ex-offenders will be required to have an appropriate risk assessment with partner or multi agencies before an offer of accommodation is made. The aim of this risk assessment will be to ensure that appropriate support and/or supervision is in place before the offer of accommodation is made. This may mean that restrictions will be placed on the property type and/or location offered.

6.9 Vulnerable applicants

Each partner is committed to equality of access to the Select Move scheme. Applicants with special or specific needs and vulnerable applicants will be provided with appropriate assistance. Any support plans submitted must be agreed with the relevant partner. Assistance may also include auto bidding, bidding by telephone, or staff assisted bidding.

A proxy may place bids on the applicant's behalf with the applicant's agreement where a proxy is required or requested.

6.10 Sheltered housing

An applicant for sheltered housing must normally be aged 55 or over or have a need for sheltered accommodation due to a disability or some other vulnerability. An assessment of the applicants need for sheltered housing will be undertaken. It is a condition of all tenancies in sheltered housing schemes that tenants agree to accept the services offered. Separate charges are made for these services in addition to the rent. Further details are available from each sheltered scheme.

6.11 Supported accommodation

There is a range of supported accommodation available in each local authority area. However apart from older persons accommodation supported accommodation is not available through Select Move.

An applicant wishing to access supported accommodation should contact their Local Authority housing options service for more information.

6.12 Care and support needs

If an applicant has high care or support needs and an assessment indicates that they may have specific requirements Partners may make a referral to Social Services requesting a needs assessment if there is not already one in place. Select Move will work with Social Services to allocate accommodation in accordance with an applicant's care and support plan, but there may be cases where there will be no prospect of Select Move partners being able to offer accommodation.

7. Closing applications, Reviews and Complaints

7.1 Closing or cancelling applications

An application will be closed from the housing register in the following circumstances:

At the request of the applicant.

If the applicant becomes ineligible or no longer qualifies under this policy.

When the applicant has been housed through the scheme.

When a tenant of social housing completes a mutual exchange.

If the applicant fails to respond to a request for further information within 28 working days.

Where an applicant has refused three reasonable offers within the past 12 months their application may be closed and will not be allowed to re-apply to the register for a 6 month period. In this case the applicant will be required to re-register and will lose their time on the register.

Where an applicant fails to respond to a review of their application.

Where there are reasonable reasons for the applicant failing to make contact or repeatedly refusing accommodation, or where there is new and relevant information, an applicant can request to be reinstated on the register. Upon reinstatement their original banding and effective date will be awarded. Requests to be reinstated on the register must be made within 3 months of removal.

An applicant whose application has been closed can apply to re-join the register in which case they will receive a new effective date in accordance with this policy.

7.2 Annual review of applications

Every application on the register will be reviewed at least annually on the anniversary of its entry on the register.

7.3 Requesting a Review

An applicant has the right to request a review of any decision made on their application if they are not satisfied with any decision made, for example the banding awarded or effective date applied.

The applicant or someone authorised to act on their behalf must notify in writing the Select Move partner dealing with their application within 28 days of the date on which the applicant is notified of the decision. The notification must set out the grounds for the review. The relevant local authority will deal with any decisions about homelessness duty or housing options.

The review will be carried out by a member of staff of the partner organisation dealing with the applicant who is senior to the person who made the original decision. The review will exclude any staff that may have had any influence or involvement in the original decision. The applicant will be given the opportunity to submit any further information that they may want the reviewing officer to consider. The applicant will also be informed of the right to make oral representations as well as written representations.

The review is a reconsideration of the case and is not limited to the facts at the date of the original decision and will be made on the relevant information available at the time of the review. In addition to any information provided by the applicant, the reviewing officer may ask for further information that is reasonably required to make a decision. The merits of each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Select Move partners' will aim to complete all reviews within 28 days of receiving all relevant unless a longer period has been agreed with the applicant. If the reviewing officer decides that there is deficiency or irregularity in the original decision, or the manner in which it was made, but still decides to make a decision which is against the interests of the applicant on one or more issues, the reviewing officer shall notify the applicant (a) that the reviewer is so minded and the reasons why; and (b) that the applicant, or someone acting on his behalf, may make representations to the

reviewer orally or in writing or both. The applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing. If the original decision is upheld, the applicant will be informed of the reasons for this decision. Where a decision has been made in line with Select Move’s policies and procedures, applicants may not have the right to invoke a partner’s complaints policy to challenge the decision again.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO is an independent organisation which considers complaints about how a local authority has dealt with an application or request for a service for example how the authority discharges its homelessness duty under the allocation scheme.

The LGO website is www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO address is

PO Box 4471, Coventry, CV4 0EH

The Housing Ombudsman (HO)

The HO is an independent organisation which considers complaints about how a housing association dealt with an application or request for a service for example mutual exchanges or transfers.

The HO website is www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The HO address is

81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

The HO website provides advice about which service applicants should contact according to the type of complaint they have.

Appendix A

Shortlisting Criteria

When short listing those applicants who have expressed an interest in a property advertised on the Select Move scheme the following criteria will be followed:

Table 1

<p>1. Bedroom Need</p>	<p>The overriding criteria which will be used to shortlist applicants who have expressed an interest in a property whose minimum bedroom need matches the number of bedrooms in the property.</p>
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	<p>An applicant whose minimum need is higher than the number of bedrooms in a property will not be able to bid on the property as they would be over-occupying.</p> <p>Applicants who are assessed as being able to manage in smaller properties will have their bedroom need over ridden providing this does not go over the space standard.</p> <p>Applicants/households that have a desire to live in a larger home will be allowed to bid on a larger property providing they can demonstrate that they are financially able to sustain the larger home. These applicants/households will be shortlisted below applicants that have the actual bedroom need requirement.</p> <p>For applicants with a lower than minimum bedroom need please see the foot of this table</p>
<p>2. Banding</p>	<p>Properties will be advertised in housing need bands in accordance with the quotas in the allocations policy.</p> <p>An applicant who bids will be given priority if they are awarded the band that the property is advertised in (subject to matching bedroom criteria). An applicant not in the band the property is advertised in will be considered in descending order starting with the highest band the property was not advertised in with A being the highest and E being the lowest. For example for a property advertised in band B, Applicant with B band would be prioritised followed by A, C, D and E bands.</p>
<p>3. Connection to Local Authority</p>	<p>Priority of an applicant within each band will be given first to applicants who have a local connection to the local authority where the advertised property is located. This applies to all bands and sub-categories.</p> <p>An applicant without a connection to the</p>

	<p>local authority in which the property is advertised, but has a connection to at least one of the other Select Move local authorities with then be short listed.</p> <p>It is possible for an applicant to have a local connection to more than one local authority.</p>
<p>4. Effective Banding Date</p>	<p>Within each band and after taking into account local connection, an applicant will be short listed in order of the earliest effective banding date.</p> <p>In certain circumstances the effective banding date may precede the application date.</p>
<p>Each property shortlist will follow the above procedure for each applicant with a matching bedroom need. The process will then be repeated for each applicant who will be under-occupying with the closest bedroom requirement. Applicants who have the assessed need for a larger property will always be considered before those that have been financially approved for a larger property.</p> <p>Although under-occupying applicants will be short listed under no circumstances is there any obligation on a partner to offer a property to an applicant who will under-occupy as this is not effective use of housing stock. An applicant who would be under occupying a property would only be offered the property if they can demonstrate it is economically viable.</p> <p>An applicant deemed to be under-occupying will be required to sign a disclaimer acknowledging that housing benefit (or equivalent state benefit) may not cover the full housing cost of their property. All applicants will need to demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy.</p>	

In determining the minimum bedroom need the following criteria will be taken into account:

Table 2

<p>Single people and couples</p>	<p>One bedroom accommodation need unless any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for an additional bedroom for a carer as provided by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and regulations made thereunder. • Proof of pregnancy is provided by MatB1
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One bedroom for the applicant including his or her partner. • One bedroom for each member of the household over the age of 16. A couple will be allocated one bedroom. • One bedroom for up to 2 children of the same sex

	up to the age of 16. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One bedroom for up to 2 children of different sexes up to the age of 10
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Open Market Property and 'Immediately Available Home' adverts will only be used once the property has been through one full advertising cycle. Where the same type of property in the same area has been advertised within the last month and not be let then these properties may be advertised instantly in the Immediately Available Homes section of the website.. These properties will then be allocated outside of the Select Move shortlisting criteria, allowing for any eligible applicant to be successful regardless of their position on the shortlist.

Appendix B

Data Protection

The Select Move Scheme and its partners will make every effort to keep information provided by applicants safe and confidential. They will comply with all policies on data protection. The Data Protection Act 1998 provides an applicant with the right to request a copy of their records held on the Select Move allocations system. An applicant wishing to see and receive a copy of their records should make a written request to the partner responsible for registering their application.

All information received relating to an application will be treated as confidential. The Data Protection Act 1998 prevents the disclosure of any such information to any other person without the applicants consent.

Information may be shared about the individual and their history irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances, which will include:-

- in accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (section 115)
- For the purposes of the prevention or detection of a crime

- Where there is a serious threat to the applicant or a third party including staff or contractors of a partner or any other organisation.
- Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or support organisation to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a member of his or her household, or a member of staff

Any application that has a cancelled, closed or suspended status for 6 years will be archived off the system, likewise any attachment to a live application will also be archived after 6 years..

Appendix C

Allocations – Maintaining Standards of Probity

Section 122 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 restricts the making of a gift, and the payment of a dividend and bonus, by a non-profit registered provider to-

- a. A member or former member of the registered provider
- b. A member of the family of a member or former member
- c. A company which has as a director a person within paragraph (a) or (b).

To ensure compliance with the Act and in accordance with best practice in the granting of tenancies all applicants are asked to disclose any relationship that exists between them and members or employees of the partners to the Select Move scheme.

Each partner housing association shall have in place a policy to ensure that the allocation of properties to board members and employees (or their immediate

families) is dealt with in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with the Select Move policy.

Each local authority partner shall assess in the normal way any application for housing from local authority member or employees (or their immediate families) but registration, eligibility, the assessment of housing need and any offer of accommodation shall be approved by a senior manager within the local authority.

Family member

A family member is not defined in the Act and the Select Move partnership considers that someone's husband, wife, partner, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers; sisters would be included and that similar relations by marriage or other partnership would also count as a family member. This should not be confused with the definition of close family members as detailed in the local connection provisions for qualification to join the register.

Appendix D

Domestic Abuse

The applicant will be awarded Band A priority due to domestic abuse where it can be assessed that they are in imminent danger if they remain at their address. The assessment will be undertaken through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process or relevant Select Move partner in conjunction with appropriate support agencies.

Band A will not be awarded where:

- The perpetrator is included on the application form
- The applicant is requesting a move to an area which is near to where the alleged perpetrator is living or where the alleged perpetrator has close family networks.

Band A priority awarded will be time limited and reviewed by the partner organisation that awarded the priority on a regular basis. Priority will be removed where:

- The need for an immediate or urgent move is no longer there;
- Suitable vacancies arise and the applicant does not bid;
- A suitable offer has been made and refused.

Where the applicant is a tenant of a partner organisation and the partner organisation has suitable properties in the areas requested by the applicant then Band A priority will not be awarded. In these cases the partner organisation will arrange a 'direct match' of the applicant to the property.

Appendix E

Right to Move – Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local housing authorities in England

An existing social housing tenant (living outside the Select Move area) will not be disqualified on the grounds of no local connection if they: have reasonable preference under s166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the districts of Chorley, Preston or South Ribble to avoid hardship, **and** need to move because the tenant works in the districts of Chorley, Preston or South Ribble **or** need to move to take up an offer of work in the districts of Chorley, Preston or South Ribble.

If the criteria above are met then the applicant will be awarded **local band B** to the relevant district for:

“An applicant who needs to move to a particular locality and otherwise would suffer significant hardship to themselves or a member of their household and where a financial assessment into that hardship has been undertaken”.

Whether or not the applicant meets the above criteria isn't solely determined by the need to move for work, but that it would cause them hardship if they were able to do so.

Definition of Work

- Work should be a permanent contract or one with a minimum term of 12 months.
- Work should be of 16 or more hours a week (unless it can be demonstrated that the earnings are substantial).
- Work should not be voluntary.
- Work can include apprenticeships.
- The relevant district should be the main place of work.
- In the case of self-employed tenants, work should be regular as opposed to intermittent

Distance, time and travel costs

When determining hardship, the time taken to travel to work and the cost of the travel should be taken into account. The Select Move partnership considers the following criteria could suggest hardship:

Travel time to get to work is in excess of an hour each way (personal or public depending on circumstances). Travel costs are more than £15 per day or 25% of net income from the employment. There is no transport available at all.

Other factors

These factors are all considered on a case by case basis as to whether hardship would be faced by the applicant if they could not move:

- Would failure to move mean the applicant would lose an opportunity to gain a better job/promotion, an apprenticeship, increase hours/pay or move from unemployment to employment.
- If the nature of work likely to be available closer to the applicant's home.
- Personal factors including care responsibilities and medical conditions affected by the tenant not being able to move closer to work.
- Any other situation where hardship would be demonstrable if the tenant could not move.

Discretion

Every application will be dealt with on a case by case basis allowing all circumstances and variables to be considered.

Proof of Work

A combination of the following can be used as to prove that work or a job offer is genuine:

- Contract of employment (particularly if stating main place of work).
- Wage slips showing hours worked (particularly if zero hours contract) but they are unlikely to evidence the location of work.
- A letter offering employment (it is likely that the employer will be contacted to confirm acceptance).
- A letter from an employer to prove the work and location.

Right to Move Quota

1% of a Partner Landlord's lets will be prioritised for Right to Move applicants based on the total of the previous year's lettings by the landlord in each district. The number of Right to Move lets will be rounded up to the nearest whole figure, and prioritised for Band B with the advert stating that 'applicants from outside the Select Move area who need to move for work and have been awarded Band B for Hardship will be prioritised'. The quota level will be reviewed annually based on demand.

Appendix F

SELECT MOVE

OPEN PROPERTY REGISTER POLICY

1. Select Move is the choice based lettings system for Preston, South Ribble and Chorley. Members of the Select Move Partnership let 75% of their properties for rent through the Select Move scheme.

Aims of Policy

2. The aims of this policy are to:
 - a) ensure that partners can let properties for which there is no demand from 'non qualifying' Select Move applicants;

- b) provide non qualifying applicants with clarity as to how properties are allocated under the Open Property Register (OPR).
3. Applicants on the OPR will be free to bid on all properties advertised on Select Move and which are designated by partners as open to OPR applicants but will only be considered if the property attracts no bids from suitable qualifying applicants and is deemed to be suitable for OPR applicants by the advertising partner.
4. The advertising partner will be responsible for agreeing with the relevant local authority those properties that shall be advertised to OPR bids and those which shall not, e.g. properties subject to a s106 agreement specifying a local connection. Unless otherwise agreed with the local authority, the partner shall be free to allocate the property using whatever criteria they deem appropriate subject to:
 - a) fulfilling their own charitable objectives;
 - b) complying with relevant legislation;
 - c) including details of the property in an annual report to the Select Move Partnership and the relevant local authority detailing all properties let to OPR applicants.
5. The Partnership will also monitor the letting via the OPR through the production of quarterly monitoring reports.

Equality

6. The partners are committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination and to promoting social inclusion and will endeavour to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access the OPR.
7. Persons who apply to the Select Move register and who do not meet the qualifying criteria for Select Move under sections 2' 3 and 4 of the Select Move policy shall be registered on the Open Property Register (OPR) for "low demand" properties except that an applicant will not be considered if the applicant or anyone included on their application has :
 - a) engaged in anti-social behaviour such that action has been or could have been taken against them, eg. injunction, ASBO, demotion order, possession order;
 - b) been convicted of a serious offence that has not been spent and is likely to pose a threat or risk to any partner of the scheme, tenants, local community or staff;
 - c) housing related debt of £1,000.01 or more such as rent arrears or sundry debts, including debts to a private landlord. However once the debt has been reduced to £1,000.00 the applicant can re-apply;
 - d) housing related debt of £1,000.00 or less and have not made and/or maintained a repayment plan for a minimum of six months;
 - e) failed the habitual residence test and has insufficient funds otherwise to maintain a tenancy;

- f) care and support needs that, having been assessed by a partner organisation, cannot be met through the provision of sheltered or general needs accommodation;
 - g) previously been evicted by a Select Move partner and are still considered a risk to the landlord.
7. References for an OPR applicant will normally only be taken up at the point of an offer of accommodation. Acceptance onto the OPR does not mean, and shall not be taken to imply, that an applicant on the OPR shall be entitled to receive an offer of accommodation.

False Or Withheld Information

8. It is a criminal offence for any applicant to knowingly or recklessly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their application. An offence may be committed if an applicant knowingly or recklessly gives false information or withholds such information which has reasonably been requested on the housing application form or otherwise by the partner organisation. An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf, or at his or her instigation. In these circumstances the partner organisation may seek to repossess the property from the applicant.

Review of Policy

9. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually.

Appendix G

Legal Framework

In addition to ensuring the allocation policy meets the duties imposed under the Housing Act 1996, there are several statutes and codes of practice that the policy has to remain compatible with. These include

The Human Rights Act 1998
 Data Protection Act 1998
 Freedom of Information Act 2000
 The Equality Act 2010
 Children Act 1989
 Crime & Disorder Act 1998
 Homelessness Act 2002
 Equality and Human Rights Commission (Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing – September 2006)

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