

Executive Cabinet

Thursday, 19th January 2023, 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley, and YouTube

Agenda

Apologies for absence

- 1 **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 8 December 2022 of Executive Cabinet**

(Pages 5 - 8)

- 2 **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.

If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

- 3 **Public Questions**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask a question(s) on an item(s) on the agenda will have three minutes to put their question(s) to the respective Executive Member(s). Each member of the public will be allowed to ask one short supplementary question.

Items of Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Member (Resources) (Introduced by Councillor Peter Wilson)

- 4 **Draft 2023/24 Budget Update**

(Pages 9 - 24)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Finance.

- 5 **Fees and Charges 2023-24**

(Pages 25 - 74)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Finance.

Item of Executive Member (Homes and Housing) (Introduced by Councillor Terry Howarth)

- 6 **Select Move Policy Review 2022**

(Pages 75 -
176)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Communities.

**Item of Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment)
(Introduced by Councillor Adrian Lowe)**

7 Customer Access Policy

(Pages 177 -
208)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Customer and Digital.

8 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To consider the exclusion of the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

By Virtue of Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Condition:

Information is not exempt if it is required to be registered under-

The Companies Act 1985

The Friendly Societies Act 1974

The Friendly Societies Act 1992

The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978

The Building Societies Act 1986 (recorded in the public file of any building society, within the meaning of the Act)

The Charities Act 1993

Information is exempt to the extent that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Information is not exempt if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992(a).

Item of Executive Leader and Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) (Introduced by Councillor Alistair Bradley)

9 Shared Services Review - Property and Assets

(Pages 209 -
246)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Change and Delivery.

Item of Executive Member (Early Intervention) (Introduced by Councillor Bev Murray)

10 2023-25 Community Commissioning Procurement - Approval to Tender

(Pages 247 -
266)

To receive and consider the report of the Director of Communities.

11 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

Chris Sinnott
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Executive Cabinet Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Howarth, Alistair Morwood and Adrian Lowe.

If you need this information in a different format, such as larger print or translation, please get in touch on 515151 or chorley.gov.uk

[To view the procedure for public questions/ speaking click here and scroll to page 119](#)

[To view the procedure for "call-in" of Executive Decisions click here](#)

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Minutes of Executive Cabinet

Meeting date Thursday, 8 December 2022

Members present: Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Peter Wilson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beverley Murray, Terry Howarth and Alistair Morwood

Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillor Adrian Lowe

Officers: Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), Asim Khan (Director (Customer and Digital)), Chris Moister (Director (Governance)), Jennifer Mullin (Director (Communities)), Laura-Jean Taylor (Head of Public Protection), Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Andrew Daniels (Head of Communications and Visitor Economy), Laura Barton-Williams (Communications Manager) and Jo Motteram (Senior Communications Officer)

Other Members: Councillors Gordon France, Margaret France, Danny Gee, Tommy Gray, Jean Sherwood, Ryan Towers, John Walker, Julia Berry and Alan Cullens

22.EC.42 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 10 November 2022 of Executive Cabinet

Decision: That the minutes of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 10 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

22.EC.43 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

22.EC.44 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

22.EC.45 Approval for the Contract Award Procedure and Evaluation Criteria for Trade Waste Collections from Council Buildings and Markets

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member (Resources) presented the report of the Director of Customer and Digital which seeks approval for the contract award

procedure and evaluation criteria for the two-year contract to undertake trade waste collections from Council buildings and markets.

The Council as a business has a duty of care to ensure any waste it produces is collected and disposed of correctly. This includes waste from its offices, community centres, Chorley Markets and Market Walk shopping centre. The three leisure centres along with the new Westway sports site are now operated by Chorley Leisure, will be included in the contract specification but service costs for these sites will be recharged to Chorley Leisure.

Members noted that the current contract will end on 31 March 2023 and new arrangements need to be put in place. The tender period for the new contract is for two years to start on 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025. The estimate of the total contract value over two years is around £150,000. Evaluation of the tender will be on an 70% cost, 15% quality, 15% social value ratio.

Decision:

- 1. To approve the contract award procedure of an open invitation to tender advertised on the Council's procurement website, Chest. Tenders will be evaluated to establish the most economically advantageous tender based on 70% cost, 15% quality and 15% social value.**
- 2. To delegate to the Executive Member for Resources authority to approve the award of the contract to the winning bidder based upon the evaluation criteria.**

Reasons for recommendations:

Under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules approval by the Executive Cabinet for contract award for tenders greater than £100,000 is required.

Other options considered and rejected:

To not agree contract award procedure would fail to comply with the Council's Procurement rules.

22.EC.46 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Decision: To exclude the press and public for the following items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

22.EC.47 Tatton Gardens Update

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) presented the report of the Deputy Chief Executive which provides a development progress and commercial update for the Tatton Gardens scheme.

Members applauded the development and thanked officers for all their hard work in ensuring its delivery.

Decision:

To note the ongoing commercial discussions with the Contractor for the Tatton Gardens Scheme.

Reasons for recommendations:

To ensure that members are kept updated on the financial position for the Tatton Gardens development.

Other options considered and rejected:

To delay updating Members until all commercial negotiations are concluded. This has been rejected as there are implications on the currently approved budget that need to be concluded.

22.EC.48 Shared Services Pest Control

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform) presented the report of the Director of Communities updates Members on the feedback following the staff consultation on the proposed shared pest control service and highlights the changes to the service budget following the outcomes of the consultation.

Decision:

To agree to implement the service.

Reasons for recommendations:

1. A shared pest control service will provide improved resilience across South Ribble Council and overall Improved Service Delivery across Chorley as detailed within the Shared Service Joint Committee Paper (appendix A).
2. The feedback from the staff consultation has not presented any reason to reconsider and/or prevent the proposal to implement the shared service.

Other options considered and rejected:

Other service delivery options had been considered prior to presentation to Shared Services Joint Committee which included; delivery through external contractors and in-house separate services. The proposed shared service has concluded to be both in favour financially and in support of both authorities' corporate priorities.

Chair

Date

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	19 January 2023

Draft 2023/24 Budget Update

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. The report sets out the draft budget position for the council for 2023/24 and the forecast for 2024/25, reflecting the information contained within the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement announced on 19th December 2022.
2. The draft budget position is published for consultation every year by the council. The figures in the report are subject to receipt of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement announcement which is due from Government in late January/early February 2023.

Recommendations to Informal Cabinet

3. That Members agree the contents of this report in order to start the budget consultation process as follows;
 - A proposed 1.99% increase in council tax in 2023/24 with no proposed cuts to services;
 - A forecast balanced budget for 2023/24, based on a 1.99% increase in council tax as noted above;
 - A forecast budget shortfall for 2024/25 which will continue into 2025/26, to be addressed through the development and delivery of the council's Transformation Strategy and savings programme;
 - To note the proposals in the report for investment in the Labour Administration's priority areas.

Reasons for recommendations

4. The council wishes to set out its budget proposals and consult on them with residents.

Other options considered and rejected

5. None, this is the draft budget and alternative budgets may be considered as part of the final budget proposal.

Executive summary

6. The Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023/24 was announced on 19th December 2022, with information regarding specific elements of funding and grants issued in the week thereafter. The settlement contained information regarding funding levels and council tax increases for 2023/24 and, for a number of funding streams, information on their expected levels in 2024/25. Based on this information, the budget forecast for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have been updated as follows:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) presented to Finance Council in February 2022 assumed an increase in council tax of 1.99% in 2023/24. However within the recent settlement announcement, Government confirmed a council tax increase limit for district councils in 2023/24 of 3%; this is an increase from the 2% limit set in previous years. Despite the continued pressures on council expenditure budgets, including the impact of rising inflation and increasing utility costs, combined with the real terms reduction in Government funding provided to the council since 2010, it is recommended to limit the increase to Chorley residents to 1.99% as previously proposed;
- The MTFS in February 2022 also assumed an increase in council tax of 1.99% for 2024/25. In line with the Government’s announcement in the Provisional Settlement that the 3% limit would also be extended to 2024/25, the MTFS has been revised to reflect this increase, although as required, this assumption will be revisited next year and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements;
- The figures reflect continued investment in ongoing revenue budgets to ensure the delivery of corporate strategy priorities;
- A capital investment of over £23.5m is included in respect of corporate priority projects over the 3-year period;
- The figures reflect the corporate strategies and decisions taken by the council to date to reduce the budget deficit over the medium term.

7. Consultation on the proposed budget for 2023/24 will commence following approval of the proposals by Executive Cabinet. The consultation will invite responses from residents, partners, parish groups and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including a short survey. The feedback will be used to frame the allocation of resources and investments, and the results will be analysed and published in February for consideration as part of the council’s final budget.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

9. A In presenting the draft budget position for 2023/24 it is important to review the context within which this has been developed, and how the budget and financial risk have been

managed to date to ensure that costs remain controlled and savings generated, whilst investment has been made in service delivery to the residents and businesses of the borough.

Local Government Funding Uncertainty

10. The council's funding levels have fallen from over £17m in 2016/17 to approximately £14m in 2023/24 despite increasing costs and demand pressures for services.
11. Uncertainty remains around the council's future funding streams, as the Government's recent announcement was for a one-year financial settlement for 2023/24 rather than the expected multi-year settlement stated earlier in the year.
12. The Provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 19th December 2022 therefore represents a 'holding position' for the next two years until the next Parliament and is aimed at providing stability in the short term for local government finances. By ruling out a business rates reset or a fair funding review over this period the funding distribution will remain fairly stable, however longer term the questions remain about the future funding system.

Economic Uncertainty

13. Against this backdrop of future funding uncertainty, and whilst emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, the council, its residents and businesses are now facing significant economic challenges with escalating utility costs, soaring increases in inflation to levels not seen in over 40 years, and a cost of living crisis.

Budget Management and Investment

14. Although the council has continued to experience unfunded inflationary increases in staffing and non-staff costs, it has been ambitious in its approach to meeting the budget deficit over the years by realising efficiency savings and generating additional income.
15. Costs have successfully been controlled whilst the provision of high-quality services that are expected by residents and businesses have continued. The council achieves this by continually reviewing its budgets and contracts, by delivering efficiencies and by realising savings such as those achieved through the exploration of, and investment in alternative delivery models, including sharing services with South Ribble Borough Council.
16. The council has, and will continue, to invest in the borough to improve housing, to provide employment opportunities, and to maximise opportunities to generate income, thereby making the council less reliant on the increasingly uncertain funding from Government.
17. Examples of the successes in this approach to date are;
 - The investment in the **Market Walk Shopping Centre** - the investment generates approximately £834k of net income (after borrowing) each year, as well as notably improving the town centre, providing jobs and delivering on the council's ambition and vision to regenerate the town centre;
 - All the 65 apartments at **Primrose Gardens** are occupied, supporting people to live independently whilst receiving the care and support needed to enjoy later life whilst generating a net income of approximately £327k per annum for the council;

- To maximise the £8.5m investment in the **Strawberry Fields Digital Office Park**, the remaining capital budget has been utilised to reconfigure the internal floor area to capitalise on interest from potential tenants and to manage the site as efficiently as possible. The budget reflects a net income to the council (after borrowing) of £131k for 2023/24 onwards;
- The £33m investment in the **Logistics House** site in 2019 currently generates a net income, after borrowing costs, of £455k which is expected to rise to over £1.0m per annum towards the end of the lease term. To mitigate financial risk, the council set aside an initial £450k of net income in 2020/21 to create an income equalisation reserve that can be used if necessary, to manage any potential budget implications of the site becoming vacant.

18. Examples of new developments that continue to support this strategy are;

- **Strawberry Meadows** – opened in October 2022, providing light industrial units for business use to drive forward local economic growth and generating a net income of £310k per year;
- **Whittle Health Hub** – a new GP surgery which opened in March 2022, providing a new, modern and high-quality health facility for Whittle-le-Woods, and generating £74k per year for the council.

Council Tax Increases

19. Through effective management of its budget and investment in income generating projects, Chorley Council has been able to maintain one of the lowest levels of council tax in Lancashire as demonstrated in **Table 1** below:

Table 1:

	Band D Equivalent 2022/23 £
Preston	333.63
Burnley	318.49
Rosendale	290.80
Pendle	281.50
Hyndburn	260.64
Lancaster	241.95
South Ribble	223.24
Fylde	219.19
West Lancs.	218.39
Wyre	214.74
Chorley	199.66*
Ribble Valley	160.69

(* - includes Band D equivalent Special Expenses of £21.40)

20. The council remains committed to supporting those who may struggle to pay their council tax because of the challenging circumstances they find themselves in, and will make use of the monies it has available to support council taxpayers.

Investing in Corporate Priorities

21. The council continues to invest in delivering the ambitions set out in its Corporate Strategy and to ensure that the council delivers high quality services to its residents. The key areas of investment are set out on the following pages.

Investment in 2022/23

22. The council allocates significant revenue investment to deliver corporate strategy priorities through a programme of diverse activities. These activities were designed to progress action to address the economic impact of the pandemic including support for businesses and activity to increase jobs and skills, establishing key assets for the future and to respond to the needs of communities by enhancing essential services and facilities.

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all

- Additional **£240k** to top-up the climate change fund to deliver the climate change strategy and commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030;
- **£30k** to support communities and local groups to come together and support the Queens Jubilee through neighbourhood events and street parties.

Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities

- **£2.7m** budget set aside to improve local play and community facilities across the borough, including Milestone Meadow in Euxton, Foxcote in Astley Village, Station Road in Croston and in Whittle-le-Woods;
- Housing has remained a key priority for the council with investment approved of over **£3.0m** to support the delivery of affordable housing, to provide properties for refugees, as well as providing adaptation grants to assist residents during the year; this is in addition to the Tatton Gardens extra care scheme.

An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

- **£200k** funding allocated to make improvements to non-council playgrounds and spaces across the borough and bring them up to the same standard as council owned spaces, supporting young people and promoting health and wellbeing.
- **£30k** investment in Check Out Chorley to carry out additional promotional activity, refresh checkoutchorley.com to be launched in the Spring and development work with tourism aligned to a refresh of the markets and Astley Hall, supporting a strong economic recovery

A strong local economy

- **£200k** to support local businesses to recover from the pandemic with additional support, advice and grants alongside a refreshed Economic Strategy and action plan.

- **£200k** investment to establish and develop our approach to apprenticeships, graduate and training posts in areas of high market demand – building resilience and improving quality in our service provision and supporting people into high quality employment.

Investment in Priorities 2023/24

23. The Council has invested in services and delivered positive outcomes for residents in a time of significant disruption, supporting a positive recovery from the pandemic and creating opportunities for residents. The Council re-set its Corporate Strategy in November 2022 to establish four new key priorities that aim to get Chorley in the best position for the future:

- Housing where residents can live well
- A green and sustainable borough
- An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas
- Health, safe and engaged communities

24. From across the capital programme, revenue budgets and specific ear-marked reserves, this budget will invest in activity that will continue to drive forward priorities and key projects to achieve the vision for Chorley to have strong communities, a resilient economy, excellent services and a greener future.

Housing where residents can live well

- £2.8m of further investment in affordable homes and adaptation grants
- £100k investment in measures to improve home energy efficiency
- £50k to investigate flexible housing solutions to meet the needs of all communities

A green and sustainable borough

- £35k to plant more trees as part of establishing green corridors
- £200k environmental improvements and proactive activity to clean up neighbourhoods
- £80k to deliver energy improvement measures for businesses
- £50k to deliver additional Electric Vehicle charging points

An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

- £150k to continue improving Astley Hall
- £400k to improve rural business connectivity
- £240k to provide additional support for businesses
- £10k to launch a skills and jobs programme for local residents

Health, safe and engaged communities

- £120k to provide more support for families and young people to access services that can give them the best start in life
- £15k for health and wellbeing activities that can be access by residents within their local communities

2023/24 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

25. The draft budget has been developed in line with the achievements, decisions and actions taken by the council to date as outlined above. Despite the difficult financial position and cost pressures faced, reflecting soaring inflation, increased utility costs and rising interest rates along with the uncertainty around future Government funding, the council is committed to delivering on the agreed priorities and the budget reflects this.
26. The key components of the draft 2023/24 Budget and MTFS, and the assumptions and information on which they are based, are detailed below.
27. A key contributory factor in the development of the draft 2023/24 Budget and MTFS for the following 2 years is the Local Government Finance Settlement, through which Government sets out the funding it will make available to local authorities along with the parameters within which other sources of income, Council Tax and Business Rates, can be raised.
28. The fact that again we have only received a one year settlement has exacerbated the uncertainty and the risk in our financial planning; in the absence of any figures or framework from Government, it is almost impossible to prepare a credible financial strategy beyond 31 March 2024 with any degree of confidence in the underlying assumptions. Uncertainty prevails in respect of the development and implementation of a new Fair Funding Review and changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme but within this financial context we are developing the MTFS.

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

29. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 was published on 19 December 2022 and the implications of this are outlined below, along with details of the planning assumptions provided by Government for the 2024/25 local government financial settlement.

Business Rates

30. The Provisional Settlement confirmed that the Lancashire Business Rates Pool will be able to continue in 2023/24 and also into 2024/25. As a member, Chorley Council benefits from additional business rates income of approximately £0.86m per annum as a result of being in the pool. In the absence of any further information regarding Business Rates Retention reform, the pool is assumed to continue throughout the period of the MTFS.

New Homes Bonus

31. Whilst it had been announced last year that funding from New Home Bonus (NHB) would discontinue in 2023/24, the provisional settlement announced an allocation of £0.297m for 2023/24 (2022/23 - £886k). The reduction reflects the fact that the allocations no longer include any legacy payments for prior years, nor do the 2023/24 allocation have any legacy payments in the future. Reflecting prior announcements of its withdrawal, no further NHB allocations have been assumed beyond 2023/24.

Council Tax

32. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed a council tax increase limit for district councils in 2023/24 of up to 3% or £5 (whichever is the greater) on a Band D equivalent in 2023/24. It also confirmed that the same limits will continue

in 2024/25. The MTFs presented to Finance Council in February 2022 however, assumed an increase of 1.99% in each of these years.

33. Despite the continued pressures on council expenditure budgets, including the impact of rising inflation and increasing utility costs, combined with the real terms reduction in Government funding provided to the council since 2010, it is recommended to limit the increase to Chorley residents to 1.99% in 2023/24 as previously proposed, whilst revising the position for 2024/25 to reflect the new limit. The 2024/25 position will be revisited next year as part of the budget setting process and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements

Lower Tier Services Grant

34. The Lower Tier Services Grant, first introduced in 2021/22 as a non-recurring, un-ringfenced grant has, together with a proportion of the expired New Homes Bonus legacy payments referred to in point 31 above, been re-purposed into a new grant called the Minimum Funding Guarantee, introduced in 2023/24 to ensure that all councils receive a minimum increase of 3% in their Core Spending Power (i.e. the level of resources that the Government assumes councils have available to them based on a combination of their assumed council tax income, business rates income and new homes bonus grant allocation). The minimum 3% increase is calculated before applying assumptions on council tax rate increases for 2023/24, although including increases in the council tax base from information provided to Government back in September 2022. In 2022/23 the council received £506k of funding from this grant.

Services Grant

35. The level of this grant has been reduced, in part due to the cancellation of the previously announced increase in National Insurance Contributions from 1st April 2023, and also to move funding into the Supporting Families Programme. The methodology for the distribution of the grant remains unchanged, for which the council will receive £0.114m in 2023/24. Previously described as a 'one-off' grant in 2022/23 (£0.203m), although allocated again in 2023/24, it is unclear what will happen to the grant in 2024/25 but for budgeting purposes it has been assumed it will cease beyond 2023/24.

Minimum Funding Guarantee

36. This new grant replaces the Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the previous funding provided by New Homes Bonus legacy payments; it is intended to provide a funding floor for all local authorities so that no authority would see an increase in Core Spending Power of less than 3% (before any assumption on council tax rate increases, but after increases in the council tax base are applied). The council has been allocated £1.151m in the Provisional Settlement for this in 2023/24. Given that the grant is based on, and is subsumed within, the council's Core Spending Power and that this figure is reported for all authorities across the country each year within the Settlement as a measure of growth in the funding by Government, it is unlikely that this will reduce, and as such it has been assumed that this grant will continue into 2024/25.

EXEPNDITURE

Pay Award

37. In the Spending Review of October 2021, the Chancellor said that pay awards for public sector workers in 2022/23 would be in line with CPI. At the time the 2022/23 Budget was approved the negotiations for 2021/22 had yet to conclude and no fixed

point in time had been announced for the determination of CPI for the 2022/23 pay award. As such a provision of 2% was included in the pay budget for 2022/23, which equated to approximately £200k per year. A pay award was agreed in November 2022 of £1,925 per whole time equivalent, for which no additional funding was provided. The increase in costs over and above the budget provided equated to approximately £0.597m which presents a recurring cost pressure in 2023/24 and beyond.

38. Given the increases in inflation over the course of 2022 and the forecasts moving forward, the pay award assumption for 2023/24 has been reviewed and this has been increased from 2% for the year to 5% increasing costs by a further £465k. The assumption for 2024/25 and 2025/26 have also been adjusted and included in the MTFS at 5% and 2% respectively.
39. The National Living Wage will rise from £9.50 to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over from April 2023. This will not affect Chorley Council's pay bands for 2023/24 as the council pays above this level already.

Pension

40. The results of the Lancashire County Pension Fund triennial actuarial valuation of 2022 have now been received. The fund has had a strong performance over the last 3 years through to 31st March 2022, however since 31st March, with the volatility in global financial markets, inflation and interest rates, the position has been more turbulent. Overall, the Chorley Council section of the fund will now see a reduction in the financial contributions required, comprising;
 - an increase in the level of Employer Pension Contribution rates from 16.4% to 18.3% for the next 3 years (i.e. a 1% increase results in approx. £74k of cost – increase of £140k in total) however;
 - the annual cost of the repayment of the fund deficit will reduce from £467k per annum to £0.
41. Overall, the actuarial valuation has reduced the council's pension costs by approximately £327k compared to the costs included in the MTFS approved by Council in February 2022, which assumed the existing employer pension contribution costs would remain at their 2022/23 levels.

Inflation and Utilities Increases

42. CPI rose by 11.1% in the 12 months to October 2022, up from 6.2% in February when the 2022/23 Budget and MTFS was approved. Following the announcement of the household energy price cap, CPI forecasts have been revised with full year estimates of 9.1% for 2022, 7.4% for 2023 and a reduction down to 0.6% in 2024.
43. The council will continue to support its wholly owned leisure services company in response to the escalation in utility costs and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the level of income generated, on the basis that any intervention will be short term and that the cost to the council will cease over the medium-term as the company develops its services to fully cover its own costs.

Forecast outturn 2022/23

44. In the last Revenue Monitoring report presented to the Executive Cabinet in November 2022 for Quarter 2 - the 6 months to 30th September, a forecast overspend for the financial year of £0.287m was reported primarily due to the unfunded, nationally negotiated pay award of £1,925 per whole time member of staff, which equates to an

increase in the salary budget of approximately 6% - 7% across the council compared to the budgeted provision of 2%, together with pressures from the increases in inflation and the escalating costs of utilities. The position continues to be refined as we finalise the Quarter 3 Monitoring report. A review of earmarked reserves will also be undertaken to ensure reserves deliver investment in priority areas.

Balancing the Budget in 2023/24

45. **Table 2** below presents the movement in the forecast of the Budget Gap for 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the figures that were presented in the 2022/23 Budget and MTFS approved at Finance Council in February 2022. The figures reflect an updated position based on the information provided in the Provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 19 December 2022, the work undertaken in developing the draft budget to date, and the assumptions made within this, of which the key assumptions are noted in the report.

Table 2: movement in the forecast of the Budget Gap for 2023/24 and 2024/25

	<u>2023/ 2024</u>	<u>2024/ 2025</u>
Budget Deficit – as reported to Finance Council Report in February 2022	1,117	1,177
Cost pressures		
Increase in Utility costs	426	511
Provision for support in addressing the cost of living crisis (including potential support for leisure services)	418	418
Other cost pressures	79	68
Increase in External Audit Fees	100	100
Additional provision for inflation	201	206
Salary related cost pressures and adjustments		
Recurring cost of unfunded Pay award in 2022/23 and provision for Pay award in 2023/24 (5%) and 2024/25 (5%)	962	1,344
Impact of Pension Triennial Actuarial Valuation	(327)	(344)
Reversal of NIC increases following the Government's Mini Budget in September 2022	(73)	(73)
Savings and additional income streams		
UK Shared Prosperity Fund – match funding	(599)	(599)
Savings achieved and additional income (including the updated car parking strategy, increases in rental income and proposed increases in fees and charges)	(311)	(611)
Funding announced in the Provisional Local Govt Finance Settlement		
Services Grant	(114)	0
New Homes Bonus	(297)	0
Minimum Guarantee Grant	(1,151)	(1,151)
Treasury Management and Revenue Costs of Capital		
Minimum Revenue Provision adjustments – (reflecting additional external financing secured during the year, and slippage in the capital programme)	(359)	381
Proposed increase in Council Tax		

An increase of 1.99% in 2023/24 is already included in the MTFS that was presented to Finance Council in February 2022.		
The proposal for an increase of 2.99% in 2024/25 will be revisited next year as part of the budget setting process and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements	0	(70)
Utilisation of Reserves	(72)	0
Total Forecast (Surplus) / Deficit	0	1,357

46. *It should be noted that some of the assumptions are still subject to change, for example following the announcement of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement, which may impact positively or negatively on the budget.*

Medium Term Financial Planning and Recommendations to Close the Budget Gap

47. As detailed in **Table 2** above, although a balanced budget position can be achieved for 2023/24, subject to increasing council tax by 1.99%, despite the budget savings realised and additional income secured to date, a forecast budget deficit remains in 2024/25 of £1.357m which unless addressed, will be carried forward into 2025/26.
48. The council’s medium-term plan to reduce the budget deficit beyond 2023/24 will be refined and developed over the coming months, and will be subject to future government funding announcements, the wider economic environment and other assumptions (e.g. future pay awards) which may change over the period.

Future Savings

49. The council has always been successful in generating efficiency savings and additional income to bridge the budget gap whilst continuing to deliver outstanding services to its residents.
50. In order to reduce the impact on staffing and the level of service provided, the council will continue to invest in its services to recognise additional income and efficiencies. Future opportunities include:
- A review of the council’s **portfolio of assets** to recognise potential opportunities for sale or redevelopment, whilst improving services. This council will continue to enable residents and businesses to access council services digitally whilst maintaining the necessary face-to-face support. Through the digital investment already made, improvements in council services and expected efficiencies will be realised over the medium-term. A review of the total amount of office space required has been undertaken in the new post-Covid environment; a consolidation of office space would deliver savings and additional income to the council without compromising on the quality of service to residents;
 - The council has been successful in **investing within the borough** to generate jobs, improve health services as well as improving the retail and night-time economy. Whilst delivering this, the council has also generated additional net income that supports other council services. The council will continue this approach, and in the continued redevelopment of the town centre. Work progresses to identify further opportunities to provide additional net income. The council has successfully brought in additional external

funding from various sources to support investment in the borough including Homes England, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 funding from developers in the borough. The council will build on this success to deliver future investments.

- The council is ambitious in its delivery of services and will continue to pursue **alternative models of delivering its services**. The expansion of shared services with South Ribble Council has continued with Phase 2 of the Shared Services model completed in 2022/23; the two councils have agreed that moving forward they will consider further opportunities alongside their wider priorities if improvements and efficiencies can be attained which would lead to further savings for the council.

Transformation Strategy

51. The Transformation Strategy will be refreshed and refined to enable the continual improvement of services and performance while ensuring a sustainable financial position. The Transformation Strategy will develop options to achieve savings and efficiencies as well as a programme of organisational change to support or workforce over the period.

Reserves

52. For several years now the council has made ambitious investments to help enable the delivery of a balanced budget. However, the council has also ensured a prudent and affordable approach to delivering the medium-term financial strategies. The council has set aside and increased the balance of reserves as outlined in **Table 3** below.
53. These reserves are necessary to mitigate the financial impact of the uncertainty that the council faces, such as the reforms to future funding levels, the impact of unforeseen cost pressures during the period due to global financial instability, inflationary increases and the escalation of utility costs and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the residents and businesses of the borough.
54. Reserves provide the facility to manage budget shortfalls in the short term whilst planned savings are realised. The expected balance of these reserves at the beginning of 2023/24 is as follows;

Table 3: Forecast Reserve Balances

	2023/24
	£m
General Fund Reserve	3.853
<i>Reserves - Income</i>	
Market Walk Income Equalisation Reserve	0.502
Logistics House Income Equalisation Reserve	0.450
Business Rates Grants	-
Business Rates Retention Reserve	1.415
Total Reserves - Income	2.367
<i>Reserves - Other</i>	
Income Generation Reserve	0.261
Change Management Reserve	0.209
Market Walk Asset Maintenance	0.104
Support to Local Businesses	0.395
Capital Financing	0.270
Planning Reserve	0.203
Brexit	0.035
Elections	0.064
ICT	0.140
Green Agenda	0.204
Covid-19 Reserve	0.300
Other	0.689
Total Reserves – Other	2.874
TOTAL RESERVES	9.094

55. Details of the more significant reserve balances are as follows;

Income Reserves

56. The council has set aside over £500k to manage any one-off reductions in income from Market Walk;
57. The council has set aside £1.4m to manage any one-off reductions in business rates such as unbudgeted changes to valuations or the implementation of future expected Government reforms. This represents over 25% of the forecast business rates due to the council for 2023/24.

Other Reserves

58. To implement the transformation of services and generate additional income, the council has set aside £261k of revenue reserves to explore income generating projects as well as £209k reserves to manage any one-off costs of implementing changes to staffing structures.
59. Whilst continuing to deliver a large and ambitious capital programme, which will evolve over the course of the MTFS period as new schemes are presented for consideration, the council sets aside sufficient budget to manage the maintenance of its existing assets including the additional reserves that are set aside to fund unexpected maintenance on the Market Walk site of £104k.
60. The council continues to support its local businesses with £395k in reserves to attract businesses to the borough, as well as supporting existing businesses in the town centre and other areas of the borough. These grants enable the council to match fund local business investment to expand local businesses and job opportunities.
61. The council will continue to set aside funds to obtain greater influence around planning decisions. The council has set aside a reserve that stands at £203k to support the council to defend locally made planning decisions.
62. The council set aside £500k of reserves in 2022/23 to implement its Green Agenda with £296k already committed to date. Use of this reserve includes investment in planting trees as well offering free trees to residents. The council will utilise the reserve to continue its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. Reducing the carbon footprint is a national and global issue; the council will seek to attract support and funding from our partners, including the Government, to assist in achieving this priority objective.

General Reserves

63. The council is forecast to hold £3.853m in general funds, which represents approximately 25% of the annual net expenditure budget of the council. This can be used to manage future uncertainty in expenditure and income over the medium-term. The council does not intend, nor has it budgeted, to utilise this reserve to manage budget deficits, however this will be reviewed as part of the council's budget management process.

Capital Programme

64. This report has addressed the draft revenue budget of the council. Implicit in this however, and the investment programme set out above, are financial implications for the capital programme. There is an ambitious capital programme with approximately £23.5m of investment over 2023/24 and the MTFS period.

Climate change and air quality

65. The budget set aside in this report, as outlined in point 62 above, will continue to support the council's future ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Equality and diversity

63. Consultation will be undertaken regarding this budget with IIAs reported with the full budget report

Risk

64. There are no immediate risks associated with this report however if the final report is not approved in February 2023 risks the council unable to finance its future commitments towards its corporate priorities.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

65. The financial implications of the above report are all contained within the text above but to clarify, all proposals are funded and can be accommodated within the 2023/24 budget. It should be noted that the report does contain several assumptions on some future budget elements and on the final out-turn position for 2022/23. Should any of the assumptions or figures change due to unforeseen circumstances arising before 31st March 2023, the financial position will be reviewed and reported.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

66. The budget proposals are in accordance with the requirements of legislation

There are no background papers to this report

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer)	louise.mattinson@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	19 January 2023

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	19 th January 2023

2023/24 Fees and Charges

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 sets out the current position around fees and charges and proposals for 2023/24.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To note the current levels of budgeted fees and charges and the issues specific to these;
3. To approve an uplift in the Strawberry Fields service charge of £1 per square foot to better reflect the current costs incurred at the site, as detailed at point 21.
4. To approve an uplift in the rents of all Council owned housing (including Extra Care) of 7%. (This is lower than the agreed approach of increasing them by CPI plus 1% [based on CPI at September each year] as agreed at Cabinet in July 2022, which would result in an increase of 9.8%, but is consistent with the recent government consultation on rents as detailed at points 18 and 19).
5. To approve the increase to the gas charges at Primrose Gardens to £21 per week and set a new charge for Tatton at £32 per week for electricity as detailed at point 20.
6. To approve a general increase of 5% in the fees (limited to the services listed in Table 3 of Appendix 1) for 2023/24. Given that the rate of CPI is currently running at 9.6%, and RPI at 14.2%, the recommended uplift is less than inflation.
7. To approve the full list of fees and charges for upload onto the Council website.

Reasons for recommendations

8. To ensure that fees and charges are set at appropriate levels and are publicly available.

Other options considered and rejected

- 9. No other options considered as we are required to review fees and charges each year.

Executive summary

- 10. This report sets out the key fees and charges budgets and the income generated from each. It also proposed where changes to take place to be reflected in the 23/24 financial year.

Corporate priorities

- 11. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

- 12. The Council generates significant income from various fees and charges. The majority of these charges are set either nationally (Table 1), or on an individual basis (Table 4).

Fees and Charges Position

- 13. **Appendix 1** details the key fees and charges budgets across a number of categories. It should be noted however, that the tables are not exhaustive or exclusive (i.e. some fees and charges fall into more than one category) but they give an indication of the core fees involved.
- 14. **Table 1** provides details of those charges over which the Council has no control in setting the amount that can be charged. The largest of these relates to planning application fees. Whilst the fee is not within local control, it is the volume of the applications which can significantly impact upon this budget and the income generated, and it can vary significantly depending on the size of these.
- 15. **Table 2** illustrates the specific fees and charges that generate an income of greater than £50k. The largest of these relate to the Council’s major projects at Market Walk, Strawberry Fields, Strawberry Meadows, Tatton Gardens Primrose Gardens, Cotswold House and other projects (including the rental of Logistics House). Outside of these charges, the biggest income streams relate to garden waste, car parking and building control.
- 16. **Table 3** shows the fees and charges that have generally been increased by a given percentage, or through an inflationary uplift, as opposed to being subject to a full, formal review. The increases across these can vary, but it is proposed to apply a general increase to these of 5%, which is lower than the October rates of CPI (9.6%) and RPI (14.2%). This change equates to a forecast increase in revenue of £9.2k, based on current levels of volume/demand.

17. **Table 4** illustrates the more significant areas which impact upon the amount of income generated through changes in charges. An update on these charges is below:

- Other Investment Rentals and Leases – these are negotiated on a case by case basis to ensure maximum financial benefit. Income has remained largely stable across these categories as most of it relates to the lease income from Logistics House.
- Strawberry Fields, Strawberry Meadows and Market Walk – lease charges are negotiated on a case by case basis.
- Garden Waste collection – these costs were increased to £32.50 from April 2022. It is not proposed to increase them in the coming financial year, the Council’s charge remains comparable to those of the other Lancashire Districts, many of which charge £35 per annum.

18. The Council’s housing rents have not been increased since the initial rental values were introduced for them. In July 2022, Executive Cabinet agreed the principle to increase rents at Primrose and Tatton by the rate CPI plus 1% at September each year. That mirrors the guidance from government on Social Rents which although not a direct equivalent to the Council’s housing it is a useful barometer. However, with CPI at significantly higher levels than expected a recent government consultation has suggested a rise of 7% instead. It is anticipated a 7% rise would result in an increase in income to the Council of approximately £80k

19. Some tenants would see rises in rents matched by an uplift in Housing Benefit. Analysis of Primrose Garden Tenants suggests around 60% would see the increase funded, or partially funded and up to 40% would be paying the increase directly themselves.

Primrose Gardens	Full HB	Partial	0% HB	Total
No. of Residents	32	7	26	65
% of Residents	49%	11%	40%	100%

20. It is not proposed to increase service charge costs at this point as broadly they are in line with costs. However, the increase in gas charges at Primrose means that the weekly charge for gas requires an increase to £21 and the new charge for electricity at Tatton will need to be set at £32.78 per week. These costs are reflective of actual charges incurred and include no element of uplift for the Council. By setting fixed charges the tenants are sheltered from fluctuations on an annual basis but should charges reduce then these will be passed on by way of reduction in this amount. As a result, the Council bears the risk of inflationary increases above the rates charged.

21. It is proposed to increase the Strawberry Fields service charge by £1 per square foot to reflect the fact that currently costs are in excess of the charge. Although the Strawberry Fields business model has achieved the expected levels of income in the MTFs, it has been clear that costs are greater than the £7 per square foot initially charged to businesses. Now that the building is at almost at full occupancy levels, the

costs are better understood, and it is felt raising this charge will reflect the true cost. Service Charges should reflect the actual cost of the building and a service charge report is produced each year to evidence this; due to Covid 19 and other changes in the configuration of the premise, a reflection of true costs is only now being fully understood.

Climate change and air quality

- 22. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Council’s Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

- 23. N/A

Risk

- 24. As detailed in the report

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 25. The financial implications are contained within this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- 26. The Monitoring Officer has no concerns with the proposed way forward outlined in this report. In terms of the fees referred to the council has a discretion over what level the fees should be set at but as ever it must act in a reasonable fashion.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges Tables

Appendix 2 - Detailed Fees and Charges List (to be updated following above approvals)

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Lorraine Ritchie	Lorraine.Ritchie@chorley.gov.uk		14/12/22
Hema Chevli	Hemangini.Chevli@chorley.gov.uk		

Appendix 1 Fees and Charges Tables

Table 1: Fees and Charges Over Which The Council has no Control

New Name	Total 000's
Planning Applications	(550)
Electoral Register	(2)
Electoral Register	(1)
Licensing	(92)
Land Charges	(68)
Parking Fines	(70)
Total	(783)

Table 2 Fees and charges generating over £50k

New Name	Total 000's
Building Control	(204)
Car Parking Fees	(445)
Cotswold Rent and Service Charges	(274)
Strawberry Fields Rent and Service Charges	(592)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(119)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(83)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(2,003)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(67)
Licensing Services	(120)
Market Walk Service Charge and Rentals	(369)
Market Walk Service Charge and Rentals	(1,291)
Market Walk Service Charge and Rentals	(475)
Markets Rental Charges	(363)
Garden Waste Collection	(815)
Primrose Rent and Service Charges	(684)
Streetscene Delivery Teams	(96)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(85)
Waste and Recycling Services	(141)
Strawberry Meadows	(750)
Total	(8,976)

Table 3 Fees and Charges which are raised by inflation / a percentage

New Name	Total 000's	5% uplift	Change
Allotments	(7.9)	(8.3)	(0.4)
Community Centres	(13.3)	(13.9)	(0.7)
Community Centres	(5.1)	(5.4)	(0.3)
Community Centres	(9.2)	(9.6)	(0.5)
Community Centres	(16.3)	(17.1)	(0.8)
Community Centres	(21.4)	(22.5)	(1.1)
Lancastrian	(15.3)	(16.1)	(0.8)
Streetscene - Parish Charges	(20.0)	(21.0)	(1.0)
Community Centres	(14.3)	(15.0)	(0.7)
Bulky Waste Collection	(60.7)	(63.7)	(3.0)
Total	(183.5)	(192.6)	(9.2)

Table 4 Fees and Charges which are raised by a set amount through a separate report/recommendation

New Name	Total 000's
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(27)
Cemetery Charges	(2)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(8)
Car Parking Fees	(515)
Cemetery Charges	(6)
Cotswold Rent and Service Charges	(274)
Strawberry Fields Rent and Service Charges	(639)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(134)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(1,944)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(750)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(67)
Land Charges	(68)
Licensing Services	(55)
Market Walk Service Charge and Rentals	(1,660)
Market Walk Service Charge and Rentals	(473)
Markets Rental Charges	(375)
Other Investment Rentals and Leases	(15)
Garden Waste Collection	(720)
Primrose Rent and Service Charges	(609)
Streetscene - Parish Charges	(6)
Waste and Recycling Services	(80)
Total	(8,426)

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Fees and Charges

2023-24 DRAFT – awaiting approval



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Planning and Building Control

Planning – Statutory Fees

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
Outline application - sites up to and including 2.5 hectares	per 0.1 Ha	£462.00		N
Outline application - sites over 2.5 hectares PLUS	per 0.1 Ha in excess of 2.5 Ha	£11,432 £138.00	Maximum fee of £150,000	N
Householder application - alterations/extensions to a single dwelling, Inc. works within boundary	per dwelling	£206.00		N
Full application - alterations/extensions to two or more dwellings, Inc. works within boundary	two or more dwelling	£407.00		N
Full application - new dwellings up to and including 50	per dwelling	£462.00		N
Full application - new dwellings (more than 50) PLUS	per dwelling in excess of 50 dwellings	£22,859 £138.00	Maximum Fee of £300,000	N
Full application-erection of buildings (not dwelling, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery) gross floor space to be created by the development 0-40 sq.		£234.00		N

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Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
Full application - erection of buildings (not dwelling, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery) - gross floor space to be created by the development 41-75 sq. m		£462.00		N
Full application - erection of buildings (not dwelling, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery) - gross floor space to be created by the development 75-3,750 sq. m	Per 75 sq. m or part thereof	£462.00		N
Full application - erection of buildings (not dwelling, agricultural, glasshouses, plant or machinery) - gross floor space to be created by the development > 3,750 sq. m PLUS		£22,859	Maximum Fee of £300,000	N
	per 75 sq. m in excess of 3,750 sq. m	£138.00		
Full application - erection of buildings (on land used for agriculture for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development 0-465 sq. m		£96.00		N
Full application - erection of buildings (on land used for agriculture for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development 466-540 sq. m		£462.00		N
Full application - erection of buildings (on land used for agriculture for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development 541-4,215 sq. m PLUS		£462.00		N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
	Per 75 sq. m or part thereof in excess of 540 sq. m	£462.00		
Full application - erection of buildings (on land used for agriculture for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development > 4,215 sq. m PLUS		£22,859	Maximum Fee of £300,000	N
	Per 75 sq. m or part thereof in excess of 4,215 sq. m	£138.00		
Full application - erection of glasshouses (on land used for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development 0-465 sq. m		£96.00		N
Full application - erection of glasshouses (on land used for agricultural purposes) - gross floor space to be created by the development > 465 sq. m		£2,580		N
Full application - erection/alterations/replacement of plant & machinery - site area not more than 5 Ha	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof	£462.00		N
Full application - erection/alterations/replacement of plant & machinery - site area more than 5 Ha PLUS		£22,859	Maximum Fee of £300,000	N
	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof in excess of 5	£138.00		

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
Applications other than building works - car parks, service roads or other accesses - for existing uses		£234.00		N
Applications other than building works - waste (use of land for disposal or refuse or waste materials or deposit of material remaining after extraction or storage of minerals - 0 - 15 Ha	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof	£234.00		N
Applications other than building works - waste (use of land for disposal or refuse or waste materials or deposit of material remaining after extraction or storage of minerals - > 15 Ha PLUS	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof in excess of 15 Ha	£34,934 £138.00	Maximum Fee of £78,000	N
Applications other than building works - operations connected with exploratory drilling for oil or natural gas - site area 0 - 7.5 Ha	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof	£508.00		N
Applications other than building works - operations connected with exploratory drilling for oil or natural gas - site area > 7.5 Ha PLUS	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof in excess of	£38,070 £151.00	Maximum Fee of £300,000	N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
	7.5 Ha			
Applications other than building works - operations other than exploratory drilling for the winning and working of oil or natural gas - site area 0 - 15 Ha		£257.00		N
Applications other than building works - operations other than exploratory drilling for the winning and working of oil or natural gas - site area > 15 Ha PLUS	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof in excess of 15 Ha	£38,520 £151.00	Maximum Fee of £78,000	N
Applications other than building works - Other operations winning and working of minerals - site area 0 - 15 Ha	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof	£234.00		N
Applications other than building works - Other operations winning and working of minerals - site area > 15 Ha PLUS	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof in excess of 15 Ha	£34,934 £138.00	Maximum Fee of £78,000	N
Applications other than building works - not coming within any of the above categories - any site area	Per 0.1 Ha or part thereof	£234.00	Maximum fee of £2,028	N
Lawful Development Certificate - existing use - in breach of a planning condition		Same as full		N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
Lawful Development Certificate - existing use LDC - lawful not to comply with a particular condition		£234.00		N
Lawful Development Certificate - proposed use		½ normal fee		N
Prior Approval - agricultural and forestry buildings & operations or demolition of buildings		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - telecommunications code systems operators		£385.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use to state funded school or registered nursery		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of agricultural building to a State Funded School or Registered Nursery		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of agricultural building to a flexible use within shops, financial & professional services, restaurants & cafes, business, storage or distribution, hotels, or assembly or leisure		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of a building from office (use class B1) use to a use falling within use Class C3 (Dwelling house)		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of agricultural building to a dwelling house (Class C3), where there are no associated building operations		£80.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of agricultural building to a dwelling house (Class C3), and associated building operations		£172.00		N
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of a building from a Retail (use Class A1 or A2) use or a mixed retail and residential use to a use falling within use class C3 (dwelling house) where there are no associated building costs		£80.00		N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
Prior Approval - proposed change of use of a building from a Retail (use Class A1 or A2) use or a mixed retail and residential use to a use falling within use class C3 (dwelling house) and associated building costs		£172.00		N
Reserved matters - application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval		Full fee or if already paid then £385.00		N
Approval/Variation/Discharge of condition - application for removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission		£195.00		N
Approval/Variation/Discharge of condition - request for confirmation that one or more planning conditions have been complied with	Per request householder / per request other	£28.00 / £97.00		N
Change of use - of a building to use as one or more separate dwelling houses, or other cases < 50 dwellings	Each	£385.00		N
Change of use - of a building to use as one or more separate dwelling houses, or other cases > 50 dwellings PLUS	Each in excess of 50 dwellings	£19,049 £115.00	Maximum Fee of £250,000	N
Other changes of use - of a building or land		£385.00		N
Advertising - relating to the business on the premises		£110.00		N
Advertising - advance signs which are not situated on or visible from the site,		£110.00		N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	Additional Notes	VAT
directing the public to a business				
Advertising - other advertisements		£462.00		N
Application for a new planning permission to replace an extant planning permission - applications in respect of major developments		£575.00		N
Application for a new planning permission to replace an extant planning permission - applications in respect of householder developments		£57.00		N
Application for a new planning permission to replace an extant planning permission - applications in respect of other developments		£195.00		N
Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission - applications in respect of householder developments		£34.00		N
Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission - applications in respect of other developments		£234.00		N

Planning – Non-Statutory Fees

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Pre-application charging - small	Each	£172.80	Inc.
Pre-application charging - medium	Each	£622.08	Inc.
Pre-application charging - major initial meeting	Each	£622.08	Inc.
Pre-application charging - major follow up meeting	Each	£311.04	Inc.
Pre-application charging - large major initial meeting	Each	£1,036.80	Inc.
Pre-application charging - large major follow up meeting	Each	£518.40	Inc.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**For Applications approved in 2022**

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Dwelling houses (excluding apartments)	per sq. m	£96.34	N/A
Apartments	per sq. m	£0	N/A
Convenience retail (excluding neighbourhood convenience stores)	per sq. m	£237.14	N/A
Retail warehouse, retail parks, and neighbourhood convenience stores	per sq. m	£59.29	N/A
Community uses	per sq. m	£0	N/A
All other uses	per sq. m	£0	N/A

For Applications approved in 2023

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Dwelling houses (excluding apartments)	per sq. m	£103.00	N/A
Apartments	per sq. m	£0	N/A
Convenience retail (excluding neighbourhood convenience stores)	per sq. m	£253.57	N/A
Retail warehouse, retail parks, and neighbourhood convenience stores	per sq. m	£63.39	N/A
Community uses	per sq. m	£0	N/A
All other uses	per sq. m	£0	N/A

Building Control

TABLE A - New Housing - up to 300m ² floor area	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Charge	
	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT
Number of dwellings						
1	£165.37	£198.44	£436.42	£523.70	£601.79	£722.15
2	£226.02	£271.22	£604.29	£725.15	£830.31	£996.37
3	£297.67	£357.20	£767.51	£921.01	£1,065.18	£1,278.22
4	£369.34	£443.21	£886.74	£1,064.09	£1,256.08	£1,507.30
5	£446.51	£535.81	£981.67	£1,178.00	£1,428.18	£1,713.82
6	£523.69	£628.43	£1,103.21	£1,323.85	£1,626.90	£1,952.28
7	£545.74	£654.89	£1,178.47	£1,414.16	£1,724.21	£2,069.05
8	£567.80	£681.36	£1,374.09	£1,648.91	£1,941.89	£2,330.27
9	£589.84	£707.81	£1,569.74	£1,883.69	£2,159.58	£2,591.50
10	£595.36	£714.43	£1,783.90	£2,140.68	£2,379.26	£2,855.11
TABLE A - New Housing - between 301m ² & 700m ² floor area						
Single dwelling - floor area to 500m ²	£200.00	£240.00	£600.00	£720.00	£800.00	£960.00
Single dwelling - floor area between 501m ² & 700m ²	£200.00	£240.00	£800.00	£960.00	£1,000.00	£1,200.00

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	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Total Charge	
	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT
TABLE B - Extensions to dwellings						
Extension(s): Internal floor area not exceeding 5m ²	£285.11	£342.13	Inc.	Inc.	£285.11	£342.13
Extension(s): Internal floor area over 5m ² but not exceeding 40m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£246.81	£296.17	£374.47	£449.36
Extension(s): Internal floor area over 40m ² but not exceeding 60m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£361.70	£434.04	£489.37	£587.24
Extension(s): Internal floor area over 60m ² but not exceeding 80m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£510.64	£612.77	£638.80	£765.96
TABLE B - Garages and Carports: Erection of detached or attached building or an extension to a dwelling						
Garage/Carport, or both, floor area not exceeding 40m ² in total and is intended to be used in common with an existing building & the conversion of an attached garage into a habitable room.	£200.00	£240.00	Inc.	Inc.	£200.00	£240.00
Where the garage extension exceeds a floor area of 40m ² but does not exceed 60m ²	£285.11	£342.13	Inc.	Inc.	£285.11	£342.13
TABLE B - Loft Conversion: Formation of a room in roof space, including means of access thereto. Fees for lofts greater than 40m² are to be based on the cost of work						
Erection of room in roof space with a floor area not exceeding 40m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£246.81	£296.17	£374.47	£449.36

TABLE C - Alterations to dwellings	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Total Charge	
	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT
Installation of replacement windows and doors in a dwelling where the number of windows/doors does not exceed 20	£85.11	£102.13	Inc.	Inc.	£85.11	£102.13
Underpinning with a cost not exceeding £30,000	£212.77	£255.32	Inc.	Inc.	£212.77	£255.32
Controlled electrical work to a single dwelling (not carried out in conjunction with work being undertaken that falls within table B)	£212.77	£255.32	Inc.	Inc.	£212.77	£255.32
Renovation of a thermal element i.e. work involving recovering of a roof, replacement of a floor or renovation of an external wall to which L1b applies	£85.11	£102.13	Inc.	Inc.	£85.11	£102.13
Formation of a single en-suite bathroom/shower room or cloakroom within an existing dwelling (excluding electrical work)	£170.21	£204.25	Inc.	Inc.	£170.21	£204.25

TABLE D - Extensions and new build - other than to dwellings	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Total Charge	
	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT
Internal floor area not exceeding 10m ²	£285.11	£342.13	Inc.	Inc.	£285.11	£342.13
Internal floor area over 10m ² but not exceeding 40m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£246.81	£296.17	£374.47	£449.36
Internal floor area over 40m ² but not exceeding 80m ²	£127.66	£153.19	£404.26	£485.11	£531.92	£638.30
Shop fit out not exceeding a value of £50,000	£212.77	£255.32	Inc.	Inc.	£212.77	£255.32
Replacement windows or doors	Based on estimated cost of work					

TABLE E - Standard charges for all other work not in tables A, B, C & D	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Total Charge	
	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT	Basic Charge	Inc. VAT
From £0 - £1,000	£93.62	£112.34	Inc.	Inc.	£93.62	£112.34
From £1,001 - £5,000	£204.26	£245.11	Inc.	Inc.	£204.26	£245.11
From £5,001 - £7,000	£212.77	£255.32	Inc.	Inc.	£212.77	£255.32
From £7,001 - £10,000	£225.00	£270.00	Inc.	Inc.	£225.00	£270.00
From £10,001 - £20,000	£72.50	£87.00	£225.00	£270.00	£297.50	£357.00
From £20,001 - £30,000	£85.00	£102.00	£300.00	£360.00	£385.00	£462.00

	Plan Deposit Charge		Inspection Charge		Total Charge	
From £30,001 - £40,000	£107.50	£129.00	£350.00	£420.00	£457.50	£549.00
From £40,001 - £50,000	£135.00	£162.00	£405.00	£486.00	£540.00	£648.00
From £50,001 - £75,000	£166.00	£199.20	£499.00	£598.80	£665.00	£798.00
From £75,001 - £100,000	£212.50	£255.00	£637.50	£765.00	£850.00	£1,020.00
Greater than £100,000	Charge individually assessed					

Licensing

Club Gaming/Club Machine Permits

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Club Gaming Permits: New Operator	Each	£200.00	N
Club Gaming Permits: Existing Operator	Each	£100.00	N
Club Gaming Permits: If have club certificate under LA03	Each	£100.00	N
Club Machine Permit: New operator	Each	£200.00	N
Club Machine Permit: Existing operator	Each	£100.00	N
Club Machine Permits: If have club certificate under LA03	Each	£100.00	N
Club Machine Permits: Annual fee for Club Machine/Club Gaming Permit	Each	£50.00	N
Club Machine Permits: Copying permit	Each	£15.00	N
Club Machine Permits: Varying permit	Each	£100.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Annual Fee	Each	£50.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Change of name	Each	£25.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Copying permit	Each	£15.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: New operator	Each	£150.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Existing operator	Each	£100.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Notification of intent to use 2 Gaming Machines	Each	£50.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Transfer licensed premises Gaming Machine Permit	Each	£25.00	N
Gaming Machine Permits: Varying Permit	Each	£100.00	N

Gambling Act

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Regional Casino	Each	£15,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Regional Casino	Each	£15,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Regional Casino	Each	£7,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Regional Casino	Each	£6,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Regional Casino	Each	£6,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Regional Casino	Each	£15,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Large Casino	Each	£10,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Large Casino	Each	£10,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Large Casino	Each	£5,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Large Casino	Each	£2,150	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Large Casino	Each	£2,150	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Large Casino	Each	£10,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Small Casino	Each	£8,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Small Casino	Each	£5,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Small Casino	Each	£4,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Small Casino	Each	£1,800	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Small Casino	Each	£1,800	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Small Casino	Each	£8,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Converted Casino Premises - Annual Fee	Each	£3,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Converted Casino Premises - Vary a Licence	Each	£2,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Converted Casino Premises - Transfer a Licence	Each	£1,350	N
Gambling Act Licence: Converted Casino Premises - Reinstate a Licence	Each	£1,350	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Bingo Premises	Each	£3,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Bingo Premises	Each	£1,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Bingo Premises	Each	£1,750	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Bingo Premises	Each	£1,200	N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Bingo Premises	Each	£1,200	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Bingo Premises	Each	£3,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Adult Gaming Centre	Each	£1,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Adult Gaming Centre	Each	£1,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Adult Gaming Centre	Each	£1,200	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Adult Gaming Centre	Each	£1,200	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Adult Gaming Centre	Each	£2,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£2,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£1,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£1,250	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£950	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£950	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Betting Premises (Track)	Each	£2,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£3,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£600	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£1,500	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£1,200	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£1,200	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Betting Premises (Other)	Each	£3,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Family Entertainment	Each	£2,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Family Entertainment	Each	£750	N
Gambling Act Licence: Vary a Licence - Family Entertainment	Each	£1,000	N
Gambling Act Licence: Transfer a Licence - Family Entertainment	Each	£950	N
Gambling Act Licence: Reinstate a Licence - Family Entertainment	Each	£950	N
Gambling Act Licence: Provisional Statement - Family Entertainment	Each	£2,000	N

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Gambling Act Licence: Application - Lottery Registration	Each	£40.00	N
Gambling Act Licence: Annual Fee - Lottery Registration	Each	£20.00	N

Premises Licenses

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Premises Licenses Application - Rateable Value £1 - 4,300	Each	£100.00	N
Premises Licenses Application - Rateable Value £4,301 - 33,000	Each	£190.00	N
Premises Licenses Application - Rateable Value £33,001 - 87,000	Each	£315.00	N
Premises Licenses Application - Rateable Value £87,001 - 125,000	Each	£450.00	N
Premises Licenses Application - Rateable Value £125,001+	Each	£635.00	N
Premises Licenses Annual Fee - Rateable Value £1 - 4,300	Each	£70.00	N
Premises Licenses Annual Fee - Rateable Value £4,301 - 33,000	Each	£180.00	N
Premises Licenses Annual Fee - Rateable Value £33,001 - 87,000	Each	£295.00	N
Premises Licenses Annual Fee - Rateable Value £87,001 - 125,000	Each	£320.00	N
Premises Licenses Annual Fee - Rateable Value £125,001+	Each	£350.00	N

Licensing Act 2003

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Lic Act 2003: Application for the grant or renewal of a personal licence	Each	£37.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Temporary event notice	Each	£21.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Theft, loss, etc. of premises licence or summary	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Application for a provisional statement where premises being built etc.	Each	£315.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Mandate for the release of information under the DPA	Each	£7.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Notification of change of name or address	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Application to vary licence to specify individual as premises supervisor	Each	£23.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Application for transfer of premises licence	Each	£23.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Interim authority notice following death etc. of licence holder	Each	£23.00	N
Lic Act 2003: Theft, loss etc. of certificate or summary	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Notification of change of name or alteration of rules of club	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Change of relevant registered address of club	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Theft, loss etc. of temporary event notice	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Theft, loss etc. of personal licence	Each	£10.50	N
Lic Act 2003: Duty to notify change of name or address	Each	£10.50	N

Taxi Licensing

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Taxi Licensing: Hackney Carriage Vehicles Licence - 6 months (new)	Each	£109.13	N
Taxi Licensing: Hackney Carriage Vehicles Licence - 6 months (renewal)	Each	£95.86	N
Taxi Licensing: Hackney Carriage Vehicles Licence - additional charge for unmet demand survey	Each	£220.55	N
Taxi Licensing: Private Hire Vehicles Licence - 6 months (new)	Each	£105.18	N
Taxi Licensing: Private Hire Vehicles Licence - 6 months (renewal)	Each	£91.97	N
Taxi Licensing: Private Operators Licence - Grant & Renewal	Each	£128.81	N
Taxi Licensing: Private Hire Driver's Licence - Grant (includes knowledge test)	Each	£222.74	N
Taxi Licensing: Private Hire Driver's Licence - Renewal	Each	£191.08	N
Taxi Licensing: Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence - Grant (includes knowledge test)	Each	£214.21	N
Taxi Licensing: Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence - Renewal	Each	£182.06	N
Taxi Licensing: Driver's Licence - Grant (both badges and knowledge test)	Each	£246.33	N
Taxi Licensing: Driver's Licence - Renewal (both badges)	Each	£214.18	N
Taxi Licensing: MOT Test	Each	£54.85	N
Taxi Licensing: Taxi Testing (not covered by normal MOT Test)	Each	£10.25	Inc.
Taxi Licensing: Subsequent Knowledge Tests	Each	£28.50	Inc.
Taxi Licensing: Full set of livery	Each	£39.56	N
Taxi Licensing: Rear plate- Flexi plate and buttons on renewal	Each	£6.08	N
Taxi Licensing: Replacement Rear plate incl. backing plate	Each	£10.46	N
Taxi Licensing: Replacement Documents	Each	£13.29	N
Taxi Licensing: Variation/Admin Charge	Each	£22.80	N

Other Licensing Fees

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Data Access Release	Each	£8.50	N
Motor Salvage Operators	Each	£112.00	N
Secondhand Goods Dealers - Shop Premises	Each	£112.00	N
Secondhand Goods Dealers – Stalls	Each	£41.50	N
Scrap Metal Dealer - Collectors licence	Each	£130.00	N
Scrap Metal Dealer - Site licence	Each	£280.00	N
Sex Entertainment Venue	Each	£8,569.50	N
Sex Shop Licence	Each	£2,166.00	N
Small Society Lottery Licence - Grant	Each	£40.00	N
Small Society Lottery Licence - Renewal	Each	£20.00	N
Acupuncture, tattooing, ear piercing, microblading	Each	£98.00	N
Additional Tattooist at a premises	Each	£31.00	N
Commercial Animal Boarding – up to 10 Kennels	Each *	£138.55	N
Commercial Animal Boarding – 11 - 25 Kennels	Each *	£156.55	N
Commercial Animal Boarding – 26 - 50 Kennels	Each *	£174.76	N
Commercial Animal Boarding – Over 50 Kennels	Each *	£247.18	N
Home Boarding Licence	Each *	£138.55	N
Day Care Licence – Domestic	Each *	£138.55	N
Day Care Licence – Commercial	Each *	£176.57	N
Breeding of Dogs (excludes vet fees)	Each *	£188.64	N
Pet Sales Licence	Each *	£158.46	N
Hiring of Horses (excludes vet fees)	Each *	£99.00	N
Exhibition of Animals	Each *	£78.00	N
Street Trading Consent: Grant	Each	Resident £440.50 Non-Resident £562.00	N

Street Trading Consent: Renewal	Each	Resident £440.50 Non-Resident £562.00	N
Street Trading: Early surrender of Consent fee	Each	£62.00	N

* License issued for a period of 1, 2 or 3 years dependent on the risk score

Housing

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Housing Act 2004 Enforcement Charges	Each	£355.50	N
Housing Act 2004 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence - Up to 5 Occupants	Each (5-year licence)	£0.00	N
Housing Act 2004 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence - 6 to 10 Occupants	Each (5-year licence)	£452.00	N
Housing Act 2004 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence - 11 to 15 Occupants	Each (5-year licence)	£1,059.11	N
Housing Act 2004 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence - Over 15 Occupants	Each (5-year licence)	On application	N
Housing Immigration Inspections	Each	£94.20	N

Pest Control and Animal Welfare

Pest Control

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Non-Residential: First visit		£56.50	Inc.
Non-Residential: Re-visits (each visit)		£31.50	Inc.
Residential: Insect pests		£41.00	Inc.
Residential: Insect pests - wasps		£41.00	Inc.
Residential: Insect pests - ants, fleas, other		£41.00	Inc.
Residential: Insect pests - bedbugs		£41.00	Inc.
Residential: Insect pests - cockroaches		£41.00	Inc.
Insect Identification		Free of Charge	
Concession - Income Support		£31.50	Inc.
Rats and mice - initial visit		Free of Charge	
Rats and mice - up to two further visits		Free of Charge	
Camera survey of drainage system		£58.50	Inc.

Animal Welfare

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Dog Reclamation Fee (excludes kenneling fees)		£80.00	N
Stray Dog Fixed Penalty Charge		£88.57	N

Community Centres

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Large Room or Café	Small Room(s)	IT Suit	VAT
COMMUNITY GROUPS Meeting regularly with free and open access to all for a variety of activities including fundraising. C.B.C community development budgets and charity.	Per hour	£5.20	£4.00	£11.10	Inc
ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIP GROUPS e.g. bingo, uniformed and religious groups.	Per hour	£6.65	£4.75	£13.30	Inc
SMALL SCALE BUSINESSES e.g. karate, dance classes.	Per hour	£11.40	£7.10	£16.60	Inc
CHILDREN'S PARTIES - BOTH ROOMS FOR FEE Children 16 years of age and under	Per hour	£16.20	£16.20	N/A	Inc
SOCIALS, PARTIES & CELEBRATIONS Socials, celebrations & party hire. Party hire where individual is 17+ years of age	Per hour	£38.00(licensed) £25.70 (unlicensed) (a £100 refundable bond is also required in advance)	£38.00(licensed) £25.70(unlicensed) (a £100 refundable bond is also required in advance)	N/A	Inc
EXTERNALLY FUNDED AGENCIES Providing a service which benefits the local community e.g. clinics, education, meetings. C.B.C.	Per hour	£15.60	£7.90	£20.00	I
BUSINESS RATE	Per hour	£25.70	£13.10	£33.20	Inc

Bereavement Services

Cemeteries

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Exclusive Right of Burial	Each	£936.00	N
Interment Adult	Each	£676.00	N
Interment Child under 16	Each	No Charge	N
Interment Stillborn or age under one month	Each	No Charge	N
Interment in a burial chamber	Each	£188.00	N
Interment of cremated remains	Each	£156.00	N
Purchase of a burial chamber	Each	£1,318.00	N
Construction of a timber lined grave	Each	£156.00	N
Non-resident Charge	Each	+100%	N
Saturday Burial	Each	+50%	N
Family Ashes Plot	Each	£590.00	N
Garden of remembrance – plaque	Each	£104.00	
Memorial: Headstones inclusive of first inscription	Each	£156.00	N
Memorial: additional inscriptions and refix	Each	£47.00	N
Memorial: tablet or vase, including inscription (Only permitted if no headstone to be erected.)	Each	£56.00	N
Garden of Remembrance: cremated remains	Each	£156.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Grave Marker	Each	£29.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Certificate of Burial	Each	£32.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Certificate of Transfer	Each	£32.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Copy Certificate	Each	£32.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Search fee	Each	£32.00	N
Other Cemetery Charges: Memorial Bench (inclusive of plaque)	Each	£624.00	Inc.

Land Charges

	Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Standard search - basic LLC1 and CON29R		Each	£152.16	
LLC1 only		Each	£23.48	N
CON29 only		Each	£128.68	Inc.
Each additional parcel - LLC1 and CON29R (each)		Each	£14.91	Inc.
CON29 optional enquiry - CON290 no's 5-21 (each)		Each	£12.85	Inc.
CON29 optional enquiry - CON290 no 22			£33.37	Inc.
Additional written enquiries (each)		Each	£25.70	N
Each additional parcel of land on LLC1 only		Each	£2.06	N
Personal search - online		Each	£5.00	N
Personal search - Appointment only		Each	Free of Charge	

Astley Hall and Coach House

Astley Hall - Tours

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Guided Tours (minimum 30 people) Up to a maximum of 40 people	per head	£10.00	Inc.
Self-Guided Tours (minimum 25 people or £50)	per head	£2.00	Inc.
School Tours	per head	£3.50	E

Astley Hall - Educational Sessions

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Educational Sessions - Tudor Life (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50	E
Educational Sessions - The Great Plague! Health and Hygiene in the 17th Century (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50	E
Educational Sessions - Serving Stories (min £80)	per pupil	£3.50	E
Educational Sessions - A very Victorian Christmas	per pupil	£4.00	E
Educational Sessions - Homes a long time ago	per pupil	£3.00	E
Educational Sessions - Textiles: Weaving and Dyeing	per pupil	£3.00	E
Educational Sessions - SEN sessions (min £80)	per head	£3.00	E

Astley Hall – Hire

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Astley Hall Hire - Non-Profit	per hire	£360.00	Inc.
Astley Hall Hire - Commercial	per hire	£480.00	Inc.
Astley Hall Hire - Large/late event surcharge after 10pm	per hour	£110.00	Inc.

Astley Hall – Wedding Ceremonies

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Wedding Ceremonies - Dining Room - Mon-Fri (all year round)	per ceremony	£690.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Great Hall - Mon-Fri (low Season)	per ceremony	£1,795.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies – The Glass House - Mon-Fri (low Season)	per ceremony	£800.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Conference Room - Mon-Fri (all year round)	per ceremony	£590.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Great Hall - Mon -Fri (high season)	per ceremony	£1,995.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies – The Glass House - Mon-Fri (high Season)	per ceremony	£1,000.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Dining Room - Weekend (low season)	per ceremony	£715.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Great Hall - Weekend (low season)	per ceremony	£2,295.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies – The Glass House - Weekend (low season)	per ceremony	£1,300.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Conference Room -Weekend (low season)	per ceremony	£615.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Dining Room - Weekend (high season)	per ceremony	£955.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Great Hall - Weekend (high season)	per ceremony	£2,495.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies – The Glass House - Weekend (high season)	per ceremony	£1,500.00	Inc.
Wedding Ceremonies - Conference Room -Weekend (high season)	per ceremony	£855.00	Inc.
Baby Naming Ceremony	per ceremony	£185.00	Inc.

Coach House – Activity Space Room

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - half day (Mon - Fri)		£80.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - half day (weekend)		£100.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - full day (Mon - Fri)		£120.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - full day (weekend)		£150.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - evening (Mon - Fri)		£100.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - evening (weekend)		£125.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - half day (Mon - Fri)		£40.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - half day (weekend)		£50.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - full day (Mon - Fri)		£60.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - full day (weekend)		£75.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - evening (Mon - Fri)		£100.00	Inc.
Activity Space Room Hire - Non-Profit - evening (weekend)		£125.00	Inc.

Coach House – Conference Room Hire

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - half day (Mon - Fri)		£120.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - half day (weekend)		£120.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - full day (Mon - Fri)		£180.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - full day (weekend)		£180.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - evening (Mon - Fri)		£100.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Commercial/Individuals - evening (weekend)		£125.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - half day (Mon - Fri)		£60.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - half day (weekend)		£60.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - full day (Mon - Fri)		£120.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - full day (weekend)		£120.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - evening (Mon - Fri)		£100.00	Inc.
Conference Room Hire - Non-Profit - evening (weekend)		£125.00	Inc.

Lancastrian Suite

Prices below are indicative and subject to change depending on external factors. For specific event pricing please e-mail lancastrian@chorley.gov.uk

Lancastrian Suite	Monday - Friday	Weekend	Vatable
Daytime (max 4 hours)	£157.40	£209.80	Inc.
Evening to 1am (max 7 hours)	£262.30	£340.90	Inc.
Full Day (max 8 hours)	£262.30	£367.20	Inc.
Additional Hour - Daytime (8.30am to 5pm)	£42.00	£52.50	Inc.
Additional Hour - Evening	£42.00	£52.50	Inc.
Additional Lancastrian Attendants (2 included) - up to 8pm	£10.40	N/A	Inc.
Additional Lancastrian Attendants (2 included) - 8pm to midnight	£13.87	N/A	Inc.
Additional Lancastrian Attendants (2 included) - Saturday	N/A	£15.60	Inc.
Additional Lancastrian Attendants (2 included) - Sunday	N/A	£15.60	Inc.
Door Person (per hour)	£14.20	£14.20	Inc.
Set-up Charges	£31.50	£31.50	Inc.
Tea/coffee/cordial (per cup)	£0.50	£0.50	Inc.
Tea/coffee/cordial/Biscuits (per cup)	£0.80	£0.80	Inc.
Fresh Orange Juice (per jug)	£2.60	£2.60	Inc.
Large bottles of tap water with glasses	On	Request	Inc.
Tablecloth hire per cloth	£5.00	£5.00	Inc

Markets

Flat Iron Market

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
6 x 3 Double Gazebo	Per Day	£30.00	Inc.
3 x 3 Double Gazebo	Per Day	£25.00	Inc.
3 x 3 Half Gazebo	Per Day	£20.00	Inc.
5 x 5 Vehicle Pitch	Per Day	£35.00	Inc.

Food & Craft Street Market

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
3 x 3 Half Gazebo	Per Day	£20.00	Inc.

Covered Market

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Peak Day (Tuesday & Saturday)	Per Day	£25.00	Inc.
Off Peak (Thursday & Friday)	Per Day	£22.50	Inc.
6 x 3 Double Gazebo	Per Day	£30.00	Inc.
3 x 3 Double Gazebo	Per Day	£20.00	Inc.

Flea Market

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Monday (single table)	Per Day	£9.20	Inc.
Monday (additional tables)	Per Day	£6.80	Inc.

Advertising

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
A4 Snapshut (individual)	Per Month	£3.00	Inc.
A4 Snapshut (4 frames)	Per Month	£10.00	Inc.
Slatwall Panel	Per Week	£5.40	Inc.

Other Charges

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
New Registration Fee	Each	£5.00	Inc.
Licence Amendment Fee	Each	£5.00	Inc.
Build out Charge	Per m2 per day	£1.15	Inc.
Transfer of licence fee	Each	£260.00	Inc.
Administration Fee (per letter)	Per Letter	£15.50	Inc.

Parking

Off- Street Parking Fees

	One Hour	Two Hours	Three Hours	Four Hours	All Day	VAT
Flat Iron	£0.50	£1.00	2 hours max	2 hours max	2 hours max	Inc.
Short Stay	Free	£1.00	£1.00	3 hours max	3 hours max	Inc.
Long Stay	Free	Free	Free	£1.00	£3.50	Inc.

Free Parking

	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday & Bank Holiday
Flat Iron	After 5pm	After 1pm - 2-hour max	All day but 2-hour max from 8am - 5pm
Short Stay	After 5pm	After 1pm	All Day
Long Stay	After 5pm	After 1pm	All Day

Off –Street Parking Permits

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Long-Stay Parking Permit	3 months	£90.00	Inc.
Long-Stay Parking Permit	6 months	£160.00	Inc.
Long-Stay Parking Permit	12 months	£300.00	Inc.

Waste and Recycling

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Civic Amenity Collection (Bulky Waste including waste electrical items) - 1 item	1 item	£21.40	N
Civic Amenity Collection (Bulky Waste including waste electrical items) – 2 to 5 items	2 to 5 items	£42.80	N
Civic Amenity Collection (Bulky Waste including waste electrical items) – 6 items	6 items	£64.20	N
Civic Amenity Collection (Bulky Waste including waste electrical items) – 7 to 10 items	7 to 10 items	£85.60	N
Garden Waste Collection Service	Per bin per year	£32.50	N
New/Replacement/Additional Bins	Per bin	£30.00	N

Other Fees and Charges

Environmental Health

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
	Each		Inc.
Copy of EPA Public Register (Commercial)	Each	£71.50	Inc.
(a)Private Water Supply Analysis: Basic Parameters	Each	£500.00	N
(b)Private Water Supply Analysis: Coliform Parameters Only	Each	Recharge lab costs	N
Provision of Environmental Information (Commercial) / Contaminated Land Enquiries	Each	£72.00	N
Environmental Permitting Regulations – Advisory Visit	Each	£203.92	Inc.

RADAR Key

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
RADAR scheme key	Each	£3.00	Inc.

Allotments

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Allotment Rental	Per year	£60.80	N
Allotment Rental (half price concession OAP/Unemployed)	Per year	£30.40	N

Council Tax and Business Rates

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Council Tax Administration - recovery admin costs for summons	Each	£50.50	N
Council Tax Administration - recovery admin costs for liability orders	Each	£39.00	N
Business Rates Administration - recovery admin costs for summons	Each	£50.50	N
Business Rates Administration - recovery admin costs for liability orders	Each	£39.00	N

Pavement Café

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Pavement Cafe Licence (Highway Amenity Licence)	Each	£306.50	No
Pavement Cafe Licence renewal/transfer	Each	£251.50	No

Geographical Information System (street naming)

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
	Charge		
Naming a new street	Per street	£200.00	N
Renaming of street at resident's request	Per street	£100 + £25 per household	N
House naming and numbering - house name added/renamed	Per house	£50.00	N
House naming and numbering - development of 1-5 plots	Per plot	£40.00	N
House naming and numbering - development of 6-10 plots	Per plot	£35.00	N
House naming and numbering - development of 11-49 plots	Per plot	£30.00	N
House naming and numbering - development of 50+ plots	Per plot	£20.00	N
Changes to development after initial notification	Per plot	£40.00	N

Football Pitches

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Junior Pitch (under 18's)	Per season	£220.00	Inc.
Adult Pitch at Astley Park with changing facilities & showers	Per season	£365.00	Inc.
Adult Pitch at King George's, Jubilee or Westway without changing	Per season	£230.00	Inc.
Junior Pitch (under 18's)	Per half season	£110.00	Inc.
Adult Pitch at Astley Park with changing facilities & showers	Per half season	£181.50	Inc.
Adult Pitch at King George's, Jubilee or Westway without changing	Per half season	£115.50	Inc.

Legal Services

Conveyancing – Freehold Property

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Sale of Land at Buyers Request	£102 for first £1,000 of consideration plus 3% of consideration thereafter subject to a minimum of £306.	£306	N
Deed of Covenant at third party request	5% of consideration subject to minimum of £306	£306	N
Deed of Grant at third party request	5% of consideration subject to minimum of £306	£306	N

Mortgage Administration and Production Fee

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Redemption on early repayment (more than 12 months unexpired)	Each	£306	No
Redemption on expiry of term	Each	£102	No

Landlord and Tenant (Commercial)

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
New Lease – Council as Landlord	10% of annual rental subject to minimum of £510	£510	N
Lease Renewal	Each	£255	N
Rent Review	Each	£102	N
Licence to Assign, Sub-Let, Carry Out Alterations, Other Consents	Each	£306	N
Notices - General	Each	£102	N
Registration of New Lessees	Each	£102	N
Agreement to / Deed of Surrender at Tenant's request	Each	£306	N
Deed of Variation	Each	£306	N
Rectification for shared mistake	Each party to bear their own costs	N/A	No

Other Legal Agreements

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Section 106 Agreement – Public Open Space	Each	£510	N
Section 106 Agreement – Affordable Housing	Each	£765	N
Section 106 Agreement – Public Open Space and Affordable Housing	Each	£1,020	N
Non-Standard Section 106 Agreement	Chargeable at Hourly Rate of £100 per Hour	£100	N
Supplementary Section 106 Agreement/Deed of Variation	Each	£306	N

Statutory Orders

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Footpath Diversion Orders – no public inquiry	Advertising plus £1,530		No
Footpath Diversion Orders which entail an inquiry	To be assessed in each case		No

Miscellaneous Legal Charges

Type of Fee	Unit of Charge	Charge per Unit	VAT
Photocopying of Deeds	Access Fee	£25.50	N
Other Copying	Per Page	£0.21	N
Sealing Fee	Each	£51	N

VAT Key

VAT	Unit of Charge
N	Non-Business – no VAT charged
E	Exempt – no VAT charged
Inc.	The fee includes VAT

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities) Introduced by Executive Member (Homes and Housing)	Executive Cabinet	Thursday, 19 January 2023

Select Move Policy Review 2022

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. The Select Move Steering Group has reviewed its allocations policy and this report seeks permission to consult on the new draft policy.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. That the Executive Cabinet approves the policy enabling the Select Move partnership to consult on the policy.
3. Any changes following the consultation are delegated for approval to the Executive Member for Homes and Housing.

Reasons for recommendations

4. To fulfil the Council's Part VI statutory duties and review the Housing Allocation policy by maximising the allocation of properties to households who are in the most need and to those that can demonstrate a local connection to the borough.

Executive summary

5. As part of the Select Move policy review, changes are proposed to improve how Social housing across the partnership is delivered. All proposed changes will be subject to consultation and can be viewed in detail in Appendix 1 and 2.
6. The amended policy proposes:
 - Strengthening the local connection rules.

- Simplifying the banding system from 5 bands to 4 including the removal of global banding.
- Reviewing the shortlisting procedure on how many properties an applicant can refuse before being suspended or closed.
- Adding new categories to band B and C on early intervention for people living in unsecure and unaffordable housing.
- Expanding the qualifying criteria for customers qualifying for the statutory housing need bands A, B and C.

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe, and engaged communities

Background to the report

8. By law, all Local Authorities must adopt a Housing Allocations Policy under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, which must be published and kept under review. The Select Move policy requires a review to make the policy fairer and clearer, and to ensure it still reflects the partnership’s priorities.
9. The draft policy aims to strengthen the local connection to the Borough. It has been identified that the current policy is less effective than neighbouring local authorities when it comes to Local connection. In the current policy you can gain a Local connection after 6 months of residing in the Borough. Increasing the local connection to 2 years will require people to demonstrate they have an established connection to the Borough and have invested in our communities.
10. It has been necessary to review how properties are allocated and how shortlisting is prioritised to ensure the process is easier to understand and priority is given to those who need it most.
11. There are new proposals set out in the draft policy that recognise the current cost-of-living crisis and addresses households that live in unsecure accommodation. These categories will provide a early intervention approach and prevent households from hitting crisis point and becoming homeless due to their current property being unaffordable.
12. The draft policy recognises the need for sustainable communities and proposes to help address this by awarding a quota of properties to employment priority and therefore meeting housing need and employment together. The percentage will go out for consultation as either 10, 15 or 20%.
13. On the 10th November 2022 Executive Cabinet accepted all the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Move Task group. This Cabinet report is not the Cabinet

response to those recommendations, but the Select Move Partnership has taken into account the recommendations of the Task group when proposing amendments to the policy. Cllr June Molyneaux as the Chair of the Task group, as well as all the members involved are thanked for their thorough review.

Proposed Policy Changes

- 14. **Proposed change 1:** It is proposed to strengthen the local connection rules to qualify to join the Housing Register. Increasing the threshold of local connection for an applicant to be able to join the Housing Register will prioritise established local families who have a strong connection for residence, family, or employment over applicants who cannot demonstrate such a strong connection.

Current Policy	New Policy
Have lived in a Select move Council area for 6 months out of the last 12 months or 3 years out of the last 5 years continuously.	Lived in a Select Move area continuously for the last 2 years.
Have close family (normally considered to be a mother, father, brother, sister, or adult son or daughter) that have lived in the district for a minimum of the last 5 years.	Have close family (normally considered to be a mother, father, brother, sister, or adult son or daughter) that have lived in an area for a minimum of the last 5 years and, under the new policy, if they do not have a local connection for residence or employment they will now need to demonstrate a need to move to a Select Move partner’s area to give or receive essential support from close family.
Are employed in permanent employment in Select Move Council’s area.	Are employed in permanent employment in a Select Move Council’s area and that to travel to work by public transport would take them in excess of one hour each way.

Exceptions under homelessness to fulfill statutory duties will be applied and safeguards for applicants who apply to join the Register who have fled domestic abuse or extreme threats of violence from another area.

- 15. **Proposed Change 2:** Select Move is a choice based letting scheme that allows the applicant the element of choice on what properties they express their interest in. In the current policy applicants can refuse three offers before an application is closed. The policy is proposing to reduce this to two reasonable offers. This is to enable Housing Associations to allocate properties faster and avoid a considerable loss of rent. The definition of a reasonable offer is set out in the proposed new policy. An example of this would be a refusal of a property that does not meet an applicant’s needs for disability adaptations, this would be classed as reasonable reason to refuse a property. Applicants will be advised to bid on properties they are going to accept to avoid any penalties being imposed.

Current Policy	New Policy Options for Consultation
Under the current policy an applicant can refuse 3 reasonable offers before they are	If an applicant refuses 2 reasonable offers, they would be removed from the housing

removed from the Housing Register for 6 months.	register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 12 months, or have their banding reduced to Band D for 12 months.
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16. **Proposed Change 3:** Reducing the number of Bands from 5 to 4 A-D, to simplify the process for applicants than the current 5 bands A-E.

Current Policy	New Policy
Band A urgent housing need cases that need to move immediately.	Band A urgent housing need cases that need to move immediately.
Band B will be for urgent housing need cases that need to move.	Band B will be for urgent housing need cases that need to move.
Band C will be everyone else that the legislation states has a statutory housing need.	Band C will be everyone else that the legislation states has a statutory housing need.
Band D – applicants assessed as not being owed a reasonable preference but meet the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive community criteria (Voluntary work or employment in the SM area) • Under occupancy by one bed • Over occupancy by one bed 	Band D will be for everyone else who does not have a housing need
Band E – No housing need	Removed from new policy

17. **Proposed Change 4:** Setting aside a percentage of vacant properties for applicants who are in employment. It is proposed a percentage of properties are reserved for working households only.

Current Policy	New Policy
Under the current policy properties for employment are often allocated to Band D this captures applicants who are employed in the SM area with no housing need, 10% of properties are allocated to this band per annum.	<p>The proposal is to consult on the percentage of properties to be allocated to employment only 10, 15 or 20%.</p> <p>By awarding a quota of properties to employment will capture employment and housing need together, however the majority of homes would not be restricted to working households.</p>

18. **Proposed Change 5:** Removal of Global banding and to place the requirement to have a local connection to the council where a property is advertised to the top of the shortlisting criteria. There will be safeguards for applicants who have to move from one Select Move Council area to another due to the risk of domestic abuse or other extreme threats which mean they would not be safe remaining in their 'home' area where they have a local connection. See appendix 2 for full details of the proposals.

19. **Proposed Change 6:** To add a new “Insecurity that risks homelessness” category to Band B. This category is not included in the current policy resulting in some families becoming homeless as their insecure living at home arrangement is not recognised as a housing need under the banding scheme.
20. **Proposed Change 7:** The proposed policy expands the criteria for customers who will qualify for the statutory housing need bands A, B and C. The policy additionally sets out clearer details for when a band will be awarded for each of the housing need criteria in each Band. This will mean assessments are always consistently applied. An additional category has been awarded to band C to capture applicants who are struggling financially and have been awarded a discretionary housing payment via Housing benefit to help pay rent. This would help prevent applicants from being evicted or incurring rent arrears. Helping people to move into more secure and affordable homes before hitting crisis point and becoming homeless. See appendix 2 detailing the band criteria for each band.

Consultation

21. Following approval being given to consult on the draft policy, a consultation programme will be undertaken, this will include a survey provided to all registered applicants via the Select move website on the key proposed changes, a link will be provided to enable all customers to view the draft policy. The link for the survey and draft policy will also be circulated to all key stakeholders. Information regarding the consultation will be provided on the select move website, all partner websites and the council's own website. The consultation will be for the period of 10 to 12 weeks and any request for changes following the consultation to be delegated for approval to the Executive Member for Homes and Housing.

Climate change and air quality

22. The work noted in the report does not impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

23. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and identifies that a full consultation is necessary which includes appropriate groups.

Risk

24. A risk register is available for the Select Move Partnership and is available on the Council's risk management system.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

25. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

26. Every district council needs to have a Housing Allocations Policy in place. This policy must be kept under regular review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. In this instant the proposal is to go out for a period of extensive consultation on the latest amended version of the shared Select Move policy. If any changes to the policy are necessary as

a consequence of the consultation, then the relevant Executive member will be granted delegated powers to approve them.

27. There are no concerns from a Monitoring Officer perspective with what is proposed in this report.

Background documents

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Policy

Appendix 2 – Consultation Paper

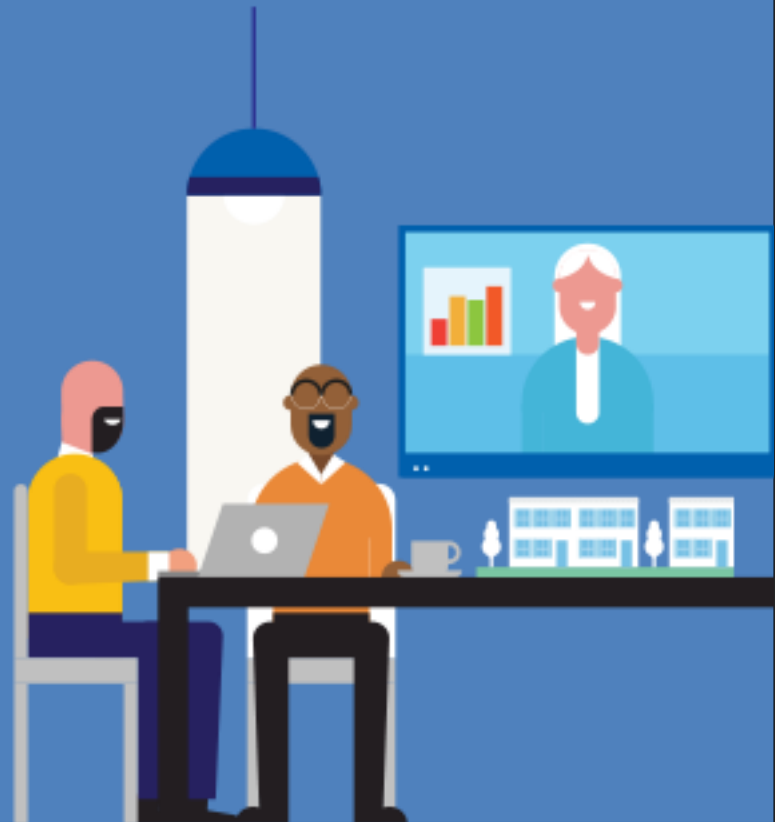
Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Lisa McCormick	Lisa.mccormick@chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	28/11/2022



Select Move Sub Regional Common Allocation Policy

Final Draft

December 2022



Select Move Sub Regional Common Allocation Policy: Final Draft December 2022

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Section 1: Introduction to the Housing Allocations Policy

This document is the revised Housing Allocation Policy for the Select Move Partnership (SMP).

Select Move is a sub-regional partnership between the 3 Local Council Districts and 11 Registered Provider Housing Associations that own social housing stock across the 3 Council areas.

The following are members of the Select Move Partnership:

1. Chorley Borough Council
2. Preston City Council
3. South Ribble Borough Council

Plus, the following Registered Provider Housing Associations who use Select Move area to let all properties that the 3 Councils have access to via a nomination agreement:

1. Accent Foundation
2. Jigsaw Homes
3. Onward Homes
4. Great Places
5. Your Housing Group
6. Progress Housing Group
7. Places for People
8. Sage Housing
9. Bolton at Home
10. Together Housing
11. Community Gateway Association

The three Councils transferred their housing stock to Registered Providers more commonly known, and referred to in this policy, as Housing Associations. This means there is only a small number of housing stock in Preston, South Ribble and Chorley Council areas, which includes specialist extra care accommodation.

Each of these Housing Associations have voluntarily signed up to the partnership. Where any individual housing association is not a partner to the Select Move policy they will continue to let vacant properties owed to each Council under a nominations arrangement, and this policy will apply to those nominations owed.

Governance of the Select Move Partnership

The 'Select Move Partnership' is overseen by a 'Sub Regional Project Board', which is governed by a partnership agreement. The membership consists of one senior officer representative from each organisation.

There is a Memorandum of Understanding (available electronically on request) that provides that the scheme is managed by a Steering Group that meets at least 6 times a year. Separately, there is an Operational Group meets at least 6 times a year which reports on operational and performance matters.

Legal context

This document is formally the Social Housing Allocation Policy for the Councils of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble as required by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

References in the policy to “the Council” are to be read as applying to all 3 of the Councils named.

References in the policy to “Select Move” are to be read as the 3 Councils discharging their legal responsibilities under Part 6 Housing Act 1996 plus the 11 Registered Provider Housing Associations listed who have agreed to join the Select Move Partnership.

In developing the policy, regard has been had to the law and regulatory requirements, including:

1. HousingAct1985
2. HousingAct1996, amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017
3. HomelessnessAct2002
4. HousingandRegenerationAct2008
5. LocalismAct2011
6. ArmedForcesAct2006
7. AsylumandImmigrationAct1996
8. ImmigrationandAsylumAct1999
9. ChildrenAct2004
10. Equality Act 2010
11. Data Protection Act 2018
12. European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020
13. Statutory guidance which is:
 - a. Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities, June 2012, updated, September 2021
 - b. Providing social housing for local people, December 2013
 - c. Right to Move and social housing allocations, March 2015
 - d. Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse, November 2018
 - e. Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces, June 2020

In framing the allocations scheme regard has also been had to the 3 Council's Current Housing and Homelessness Strategies, Tenancy Strategies, the Equality Act 2010, and relevant caselaw.

All references to statutory materials are by way of summary are not used as substitutes for the details within the original.

Each Council will provide an electronic copy of this policy to anyone who asks

for one. Copies in alternative formats will be considered on an individual basis. The whole of this policy will be kept available for inspection by any person at the principal offices of the 3 Local Authority, if someone is unable to access the policy on-line.

It can be viewed or downloaded from the Select Move website (link below)

<https://www.selectmove.co.uk/content/Information/LeafletsandBooklets>

Any provision in this policy may be waived in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the lead officer responsible for the housing service in each partner Council. The reasons why a provision has been waived will be documented.

This policy fully meets the legal requirements set by Part 6 Housing Act 1996 and it:

- Explains how priority between applicants will be determined and the arrangements for nominating applicants to private registered providers of social housing.
- Sets out who is, and who isn't, eligible for social housing in the 3 districts covered by the scheme and how this assessment will be made.
- Details how applications to join the Housing Register can be made, the priority given, and how offers of social housing will be made.

This is the revised 'Housing Allocation Policy' for Select Move Sub Regional Scheme and will take effect on or after *insert date here when the policy has been approved and you have an implementation date*. The assessment of need and qualifying criteria set out in the policy will be applied to all new and existing applicants from this date.

The key objectives set for the Policy

The key objectives for the policy are:

1. To meet the legal requirements placed on the 3 Select Move Councils to give appropriate priority to applicants who fall under the Housing Act "*reasonable preference groups*". This is to ensure that social rented housing is let to those in greatest need.
2. To allocate homes in a fair, transparent and effective way, that prioritises applicants who are most in need and makes best use of the homes available.
3. To contribute to building sustainable communities in line with the policies of the 3 Councils and the 11 participating housing associations.

Making changes to the Policy

The policy will be reviewed and revised as required in response to:

- Any national policy or legislative changes, or
- Policy changes instigated by Select Move Partnership, or

- To reflect the requirements of any leading and relevant case law.

Any significant changes to this policy will be approved by the relevant Committee or Portfolio holder for each participating local authority and by the relevant decision-making bodies of the Registered Providers as appropriate. The Select Move Steering Group shall be responsible for determining whether any proposed changes are significant and should therefore be the subject of a formal consultation process.

For minor changes to the policy, or changes to the procedures that administer the policy, decisions will be delegated to the Select Move Steering Group and, once agreed by that group, will be signed off by the lead officer responsible for housing in each of the 3 Councils, and in each of the participating Housing Associations.

Formally, any major change to the Policy can only be made after a copy of the proposed amendments have been consulted on by sending to every Registered Provider Housing Association operating in the 3 Council areas covered by the scheme. This is a requirement under Section s166A (13) Housing Act 1996.

Select Move will take any steps as it considers reasonable (for example, by making contact via email, telephone, or letter, or by placing a notification on a Council's website, the Select Move Website, or via another suitable form of communication), within a reasonable period of time, to bring to the attention of those likely to be affected by it:

- a. any alterations made to this policy
- b. any subsequent alteration to this policy that would affect the relative priority of a large number of applicants; and
- c. any significant alteration to any associated procedures for administering this policy.

Where a full review of the policy is undertaken, Select Move will adopt Government good practice guidelines and undertake a broad consultation that includes relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations, tenant representatives and applicants to the scheme.

It has been agreed that changes should not be made locally by any partner without prior agreement and consultation.

Housing Associations and nominations: agreed arrangements

The Select Move Housing Association partners 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.

The local authorities and housing associations listed above have signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' agreeing to participate in this scheme under a partnership arrangement.

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 one completed advert and shortlist has been exhausted and they have contacted the relevant Council for a direct nomination and no response has been received within 2 working days.

The Council in these circumstances is likely to make a direct nomination for a household owed a statutory homelessness duty and any offer made will be a final offer to end the homelessness duty owed.

Where the same type of property in the same area has been advertised within the last month and not be let then the relevant Council for the area where the property is situated will look to make a direct nomination for a household owed a statutory homelessness duty.

'Immediately Available Homes' adverts and platforms to let them will only be used once the property has been through the process outlined above.

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.

This policy will apply to all homes let through the scheme.

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

The 3 Councils will ensure that for any person accepted on the housing register their information will be stored lawfully and will act in a fair and transparent way in processing their data. Data will only be collected that is specific, explicit and legitimate for the purpose of the application and lettings processes set out in the policy. Data will be kept up to date and not held unnecessarily, or without appropriate security measures in place. Information will only be shared with other organisations or individuals in order to legitimately assess and progress a person's housing application, or for the prevention of fraud, or where there are safeguarding concerns, or with the person's explicit consent.

Where consent is not given, this may affect the ability of the SMP to process an application. The SMP may not be able to process an application if it is unable to make the necessary enquiries due to a refusal of consent.

A link to the Privacy Notice for the Select Move partners and compliance with the Data Protection Regulations 2018 can be accessed here for each Council.

<https://www.selectmove.co.uk/content/Information/LeafletsandBooklets>

To be added to the final policy the 3 email addresses to access the Privacy Notices for the 3 partner SMP councils

Right to information

The 'Freedom of Information Act 2000' makes it a requirement for every public authority to produce a 'Publication Scheme' setting out the information it will make available to the public. A link to the 3 Select Move partner Council's data protection and freedom of information policies can be accessed here.

<https://www.selectmove.co.uk/content/Information/DataProtectionandNationalFraud>

Equality, accessibility and monitoring

Select Move is committed to ensuring that the policy, and the implementation of all associated guidance and procedures, are non-discriminatory taking into account the needs of groups protected by the Equality Act 2010; the Human Rights Act 1998, and for Children, Section 11 of the Children Act.

To help all partners to identify the needs of applicants the application form contains specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability and other relevant criteria. The information obtained will be used to monitor the impact of the policy to enable a better understanding of people's housing needs and to ensure that no one is discriminated against as a result of the way this policy has been framed, or during the administration of it.

Under the Equality Act 2010, and in particular section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty, a Council is required to give due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, when exercising a public function such as implementing their legal 'Housing Allocation Policy'.

Select Move will ensure that the policy complies with current equality legislation and will be subject to a full 'Equality Impact Audit' before it is adopted. The EIA will be regularly reviewed as information regarding the impact of the policy is obtained and a copy can be requested directly from the SMP.

A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy for each of the 3 partner Councils can be downloaded from each of the 3 Council's websites.

Complaints

Complaints are separate to the circumstances where an applicant is entitled to seek a review of a decision made on their housing application. A request for a review of a decision made on an application should be made under the review procedure set out in section 4 and not through a Select Move partner's complaints procedure.

Where an applicant wishes to make a complaint about poor service, or the way they have been treated, this should be made using the relevant partner's complaints procedure.

Where a complaint relates to how an applicant has been dealt with under this policy by one of the 3 Select Move Councils, an applicant has the right to continue with their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman Service if they are unhappy with the response to their complaint.

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service run by Central Government to make sure that Councils provide the required standard of service to their customers.

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the Council has done something, but they cannot question what has been done simply because someone did not agree with it.

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Where a complaint relates to how an applicant has been dealt with under this policy by a Select Move Registered Housing Association partner, an applicant has the right to continue with their complaint to the The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent organisation which considers complaints about how a housing association dealt with an application or request for a service.

The Housing Ombudsman website is www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Their address is
81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

The Select Move Partner's statement on Choice

Introduction

A key aim of the policy is to, as far as possible, give choice to applicants who wish to obtain social housing. This is why the Select Move partners have taken the decision to let the majority of properties through a 'Choice Based Lettings' (CBL) scheme.

For all applicants who are eligible to join the housing register, they will be able to express a preference for an area, or areas, they would like to live in and the type of property they would prefer. However, the ability to satisfy their preferences might be limited by the lack of available social housing in the area/s chosen.

The considerable housing pressures faced in the areas covered by Select Move limits the degree of choice that can be offered, along with the responsibility the 3 Councils have to offer housing to applicants in urgent housing need. The pressures include the need to reduce the financial impact on a partner Council for households placed into temporary accommodation under a homelessness duty.

Therefore, expressing a preference over where an applicant would prefer to live does not mean that preference can be met, or that an applicant won't be offered suitable accommodation outside of their preferred area. In certain circumstances a Select Move Partner Council will, or may, make a direct match offer or a nomination to a Housing Association partner and not use the 'choice based letting' system to let a property. Examples of these circumstances are set out in this policy.

An applicant will be asked at time of registration to state any area where they believe they cannot live due to fear of violence, harassment or domestic abuse. The assessment of their application will then consider the facts and decide whether the applicant is allowed to restrict areas.

Applicants who are considered by relevant agencies as high-risk ex-offenders will be required to have an appropriate risk assessment with a 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 choice re the property type and/or location offered.

Select Move will also make available information about other affordable housing options: for example, to promote new affordable housing schemes through its website and a matching service is available through a nationwide internet site '*Homeswapper*' for social housing tenants wishing to explore the option of a mutual exchange.

Specific policies on choice adopted by the SMP.

1: When the SMP may choose to make a direct offer outside of the choice based letting (CBL) system and, in exceptional circumstances, outside of the band and date order system

Not all properties that become available will be advertised and offered through the '*Select Move*' CBL system. There may be circumstances where for operational or financial reasons there is a need to make a direct offer of housing outside of CBL and, in exceptional circumstances, outside of the band and date order criteria set out in this policy.

Specifically, this would be where there are urgent operational or financial reasons to depart from the CBL system of lettings. Examples include but are not limited to:

- 1) Situations where urgent re-housing is required due to an applicant's existing property being uninhabitable, or where there are serious health and safety or personal protection issues that need to be addressed, or to discharge a statutory homelessness duty.
- 2) Urgent housing need situations where, given the applicant's circumstances, it would not be reasonable to wait for a successful bid through the CBL system to deliver an offer.
- 3) Where there is an evidenced threat to life in the area in which an applicant currently lives.
- 4) Direct offers to persons who a partner council has a duty to rehouse under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- 5) Where an applicant is homeless and in temporary accommodation and owed a section 189B (2) Relief duty or 193(2) Main duty under the Housing Act 1996 and a Council wish to make a direct let to move applicants out of temporary accommodation in order to manage any budgetary or legal impact on that Council.
- 6) Where an applicant is not being realistic in the areas they are bidding for and, as a result, may be occupying a temporary accommodation unit that is needed for a newly presenting homeless applicant.
- 7) Where a vacant adapted property, or a property designed to disability standards, becomes available and that property could be allocated to an applicant whose disability needs best match that property regardless of the date they were registered.
- 8) Where the decision of the SMP is that it is inappropriate for the applicant to participate in 'Choice Based Lettings'. For example, a vulnerable applicant nominated by Lancashire Council's Adult Social Care Department where the outcome of an assessment is that a direct let is the best letting solution for that applicant.
- 9) Other examples, including individual circumstances of some applicants subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), or it is assessed presents a risk to themselves or others.

Furthermore, the SMP may decide to restrict the time an applicant is able to bid for accommodation for an area where they would prefer to live. In these circumstances a direct offer of accommodation may be made in any area that has been assessed as being suitable and safe for the applicant to live in.

2: The SMP's policy on choice: Penalty for refusing 2 suitable offers.

Any applicant who refuses 2 reasonable offers within a 12-month period will be disqualified from the housing register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 12 months (see separate policy below for applicants owed a statutory homeless duty who refuse a suitable offer).

This adopted rule is intended to tackle the problem of some applicants making a successful bid and then refusing the property offered, which has the impact of increasing the time it takes to re-let that vacant homes.

The SMP will determine whether an offer was reasonable for an applicant to accept using the reasonable offer criteria set out at appendix 4.

3: The SMP's policy on choice: Offers of accommodation made to any applicant owed a statutory homelessness duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996

For applicants owed any statutory homelessness duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, the need to offer suitable housing is considered to be more important than allowing an applicant to wait for an offer of accommodation in a location where they would prefer to live. Therefore, there is therefore no minimum time set that an applicant owed a statutory homeless duty will be allowed to bid for social housing before a direct offer can be considered.

An offer of accommodation for an applicant owed a statutory homeless duty could be either a private rented property, or a social rented property. Should the applicant refuse an offer which is considered both suitable for their needs and reasonable then, subject to the partner Council's homelessness review procedure, the homelessness duty owed will be discharged and they will lose any priority status granted to them based on the homelessness duty owed.

In these circumstances the SMP will then assess whether they have another housing need that means they should be awarded bands A-C. If they don't, they will be placed into Band D.

A statutory homeless duty is defined as:

- a) The prevention of homelessness duty under Section 195(2)
- b) The 'relief of homelessness duty under Section 189B(2)
- c) Where the relief duty has come to an end and an applicant is then owed a section 190 Intentionally homeless temporary accommodation duty to provide them with a reasonable opportunity to secure alternative accommodation for occupation (section 190(2) duty),
- d) The section 193(2) Main Homelessness duty or the section 193C(4) 'reduced' section 193 duty

Section 2: Who can apply to join the Select Move Housing Register and the criteria for assessing who is eligible to be included, and who can qualify to join the register

The Housing Register is open to anyone over the age of 16 years who has a housing need and has lived in a Select move Partner's district continuously for 2 years, unless they come within one of the 'ineligible' or 'non qualification' categories set out in the policy.

For current tenants of a Select Move partner, they 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 (meaning they would be owed a statutory reasonable preference for their housing needs).

A person can apply to join the Housing Register if their current address is their only home, or sole residence, and they are not already registered through someone else's housing application.

If an applicant is under 18 years of age, they will not normally be offered a property by a Housing Association. If in exceptional circumstances a person who is 16 or 17 is granted a tenancy, this will normally be held in trust until they reach the age of 18. This means that another suitable person (such as a parent, legal guardian, social worker or relative) will normally be responsible for the tenancy.

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.

Not all Housing Associations who are members of the partnership assess applications.

The eligibility 'persons from abroad' qualification rules

Everyone over the age of 16 can apply to join the register but there are some groups of people who by law cannot join the register regardless of their housing need or circumstances. These are people who:

- Come under a Government rule which means they cannot lawfully access social housing as they are not eligible.
- Do not live habitually in the 'Common Travel Area' (UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland).
- Do not have the right to live in the UK
- Plus, other categories of people who the Government may in the future, decide are not eligible for housing assistance.

Under sections 160ZA (1), (2) and (4) of the Housing Act 1996 a Select Move Council cannot nominate a person for housing, if they are a person who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of being a person subject to immigration control, or a person from abroad, who is prescribed as ineligible.

The key relevant regulations that apply to eligibility are:

- Regulations 3 and 4 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294
- All subsequent amendments including 'The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)
- The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/667) implemented from the 24 August 2020.

The above are not a complete list for all of the eligibility regulations. For example, there is significant legislation that relate to the UK's exit from the European Union and the implications for accessing housing assistance. These rules are complicated. Anyone who is impacted, or believe they may be impacted, can approach a Select Move partner for advice, or can seek independent legal advice.

The qualification and non-qualification rules that have been adopted under the policy

Under section 160ZA(7) of the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 a Council is allowed to set criteria for people who are, or are not, qualifying persons and the 3 partner Councils have chosen to adopt a number of rules. There are a number of defined exceptions that cover either all of the rules, or an individual rule.

The qualification rules adopted by the 3 partner Councils (and any exceptions to these rules) are set out below:

Non qualification rule 1: The need to demonstrate a local connection to a Select Move Council.

To qualify for the Housing Register an applicant (or, alternatively a member of the applicant's household) must meet one of the following rules. They must have:

- a) Lived in a Select Move Council's area continuously for the last 2 years and that residence was of their choice. This is 2 years in a single Borough and not 2 years living in area of the 3 SMP partner Council areas. Or
- b) Are employed in permanent employment in Select Move Council's area and to travel to work by public transport would take them in excess of one hour each way. Employment is defined as paid employment for 16 hours or more per week for a continual period of at least 6 months and is not work that is considered to be temporary, casual or seasonal. Where there is a zero hours contract the assessment will consider if, on average over a 3-month period, the person is working for 16 hours a week or more and that zero hours contract is not a temporary contract. The applicant or household member must be working at the point an offer of a tenancy is made. Where an applicant is self-employed they must demonstrate that the self-employed work they perform is in a Select Move Council area for a continual period of at least 6 months and is not work that is considered to be temporary or

seasonal. The applicant or household member must be working self - employed at the point an offer of a tenancy is made. Or

Note: Employment must be their actual place of work in area and not employment based on a head office or regional office situated in the area but from which the applicant does not work. For people employed by a national company their actual place of work must be within the Select Move area.

- c) Have close family (normally considered to be a mother, father, brother, sister, or adult son or daughter) that have lived in the district for a minimum of the last 5 years and need to be in a Select Move partner's area to give or receive essential support from close family. Note: it is for the Select Move assessing partner to assess and decide on whether an applicant meets this local connection qualification rule for close family.

Note 1: The SMP will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances whereby other family members may be considered to provide a local connection. For example, the circumstances where a person has been brought up by an extended family member, in the absence of their own parents and the applicant continues to receive essential support from this person.

Note 2: The level of support required to qualify under c) must be significant and cannot be short term or low level such as to carry out shopping once a week, and there is no existing support package in place.

Once registered an applicant must continue to meet a local connection qualification rule. If the applicant no longer meets this rule they will be removed from the register as they will no longer qualify for inclusion on the housing register.

If an applicant has lived in a Select Move partner's district for 2 continuous years in the circumstances where they have been placed into temporary accommodation in the district by another local authority, they will not qualify to join the Housing Register. This rule is justified because a Council from outside of the Select Move Partner's area that has placed a household into temporary accommodation in a Select Move area will legally retain the responsibility for helping the applicant to obtain long term settled housing.

Persons who have been detained in the Local Authority area (e.g., in prison or hospital), will not be able to establish a local connection as this does not constitute being resident in an area by choice.

For the purposes of determining a local connection for residence, Select Move will accept the following circumstances as demonstrating 'normal residence':

- a) Residency in a non-traditional dwelling, such as a mobile home that is placed on a residential site, or an official pitch.
- b) People who are forced to sleep rough in a Select Move Council's area as long as they meet the 2-year qualification period for residency.

There are a number of exceptions to the 2-year residency rule. These are:

1. Applicant's owed a main section 193(2) homeless duty by one of the 3 participating Select Move Councils.
2. Where a Select Move Council has placed an applicant into temporary accommodation outside of an area covered by the 3 Councils.
3. Where a partner Council agrees that there are exceptional circumstances requiring a move into an area. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Examples where exceptional circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis include:
 - Reasons of safety, for example when an applicant is fleeing domestic abuse or hate crime from another area, or
 - An applicant is on a witness protection programme and the SMP has agreed that a move to a select Move Council's area is essential, or
 - Where a Select Move partner agrees there is a very exceptional need to live in an area to provide or receive essential support.
4. Select Move will consider any application from a gypsy or traveler household where the applicant may not meet the 2-year continuous period of residence rule, if the period has been broken by travelling. The facts of each case will be considered when deciding whether the rule should be waived.
5. Care Leavers below the age of 21 years (or 25 if they are pursuing a programme of education agreed in their pathway plan) who are owed a duty under section 23C of the Children Act 1989 by Lancashire County Council and have been looked after in accommodation outside of Lancashire.
6. Applicants who satisfy the right to move criteria. The Right to Move qualification regulations 2015 states that local connection qualification rules must not be applied to existing social tenants who seek to move from another Council district in England, and who have a need to move for work related reasons to avoid hardship. However, the Select Move policy is to limit these moves to no more than 1% of all lettings per year.
See appendix 6 for details of how the 'right to move' criteria will be applied
7. Where at the date of application the applicant is not currently resident in a Select Move area whilst:
 - a) receiving medical or respite care
 - b) serving a custodial sentenceIn these circumstances the applicant must have been living in a Select Move area for 2 continuous years prior to their current accommodation circumstances
8. Applicants that satisfy the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012. These are:
 - a) Applicants who are serving members of the regular armed forces
 - b) Applicants who served in the regular armed forces within the 5 years immediately prior to the date of their application

- c) Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserve forces who suffer from a serious injury, illness or disability sustained as a result of their service
- d) Applicants who are a bereaved spouse/civil partner of a former serving member of the regular armed forces and have recently ceased (or will soon cease) to be entitled to reside in services accommodation following the death of their spouse/civil partner.
- e) The divorced or separated ex-spouse of a member of HM Armed Forces, who is currently serving or going through resettlement, will be exempt from the local connection criteria for a period of six months following the divorce or separation

Non qualification rule 2: Circumstances where an applicant has a current or former social housing rent arrears, or another relevant recoverable housing related debt.

This section sets out the rules for when an applicant will not be allowed to qualify for the SMP Housing Register because of rent arrears or another recoverable housing related debt.

When carrying out an assessment, the SMP will take into consideration all housing related debts, associated with either a current or former tenancy that relate to any social housing provider in the UK. Note the rules in this section only apply to social housing former or current rent arrears, occupation of temporary accommodation debts, and other forms of housing related debt listed. This section does not cover rent arrears for a private sector tenancy, or licence. This is covered under the unacceptable behaviour rules set out in qualification rule 3 below.

Note: the definition of a housing debt will not include debts that are statute barred. The debt will be considered statute barred where an applicant, or their representative or someone else they held the account with hasn't:

- Made a payment in the last 6 years
- Written to the creditor acknowledging the debt in the last 6 years defined as 6 years from date the debt was last acknowledged and 6 years from date rent arrears became due.
- Had a county court judgment (CCJ) relating to the debt in the last 6 years

For the purposes of this qualification rule housing related debts include:

- a) Debts owed by a current or former tenant of a social housing tenancy. Note current social housing tenants seeking a transfer will not normally be allowed to transfer until they have met the relevant criteria set out in this section for addressing the debt (i.e. the repayment record criteria for £0-500, £500-£1000).
- b) Outstanding re-chargeable repairs
- c) Current and former housing related service charge arrears
- d) Temporary accommodation charge arrears for a licence or a tenancy where that temporary accommodation was provided by a SMP Council

- e) Failing to adhere to the terms of an agreed payment plan in relation to rent arrears or housing debt for a social housing tenancy, or temporary accommodation
- f) Any court costs incurred by the Council or a Housing Association associated with any of the above debts

Housing related debts apply to both the applicant and to any members of their household that are included in their application.

The purpose of this qualification rule is:

- 1) To ensure any relevant debt owed to a social landlord or the Council is recovered and
- 2) To consider whether an applicant's current circumstances mean there is a risk of future non-payment of rent.

The following framework will be used to guide officers when applying this qualification rule. The SMP will consider:

- The reasons why the applicant accrued the housing related debt and whether there are exceptional circumstances that should be considered when applying the rule.
- Whether the debt has been caused by factors difficult for the applicant to control, for example a case where an applicant was unable to pay the full rent due to being impacted by the 'spare room subsidy' rule.
- Whether the applicant still owes that debt, and if they do, the extent of the arrears/debt as well as whether it is a recoverable debt, or a statute barred debt.
- Whether the applicant has taken debt advice, acted on it, and entered into an arrangement to clear the arrears/debt.
- If an arrangement has been made, the amount of arrears/debt paid off, any amount outstanding, and the regularity of payments made.

After considering the above the SMP will decide whether the applicant will or will not qualify for the housing register.

There is no time limit regarding when a person can make a new application following disqualification under this rule. Where a new application is made, the SMP will assess whether the applicant has taken appropriate action to address their rent arrears/debt.

If disqualified an applicant will be informed of any action they need to take to resolve the debt in order to qualify.

How decisions for applicants with a housing related debt will be made

A decision whether the applicant qualifies for the Housing Register will be made using the following criteria:

- (a) The applicant/household is a current or former tenant of a Registered Provider and has an outstanding housing related debt.
- (b) The applicant/household have a housing related debt as defined above in this policy of £1000.01 or more that can be proven by a social landlord.

(c) 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.
- If then registered payments must be maintained under the plan before any offer of accommodation is made.

The only exception to the rent arrears or housing related debt rule is where an applicant can demonstrate that their circumstances are exceptional, and they would therefore face serious hardship or risk through not being allowed to qualify.

An exception may be considered where for example, an applicant has a good payment history but has incurred a debt as a result of a 'one off' problem, or where a tenant had to flee domestic abuse and a subsequent debt has built up for the tenancy left.

Note 1: It is the responsibility of the applicant to make the case as to why their circumstances are exceptional. Once a request has been made for exceptional circumstances to be applied to their case their request will be considered under the statutory review procedure.

Note 2: This qualification rule also applies to applicants currently on the register. An applicant's eligibility to remain on the register will be kept under review. An applicant may be rendered ineligible should the SMP become satisfied that there is new evidence, or a change of circumstances, meaning that this rule should be applied.

Non qualification rule 3: Unacceptable behavior

The disqualification rule for unacceptable behavior will apply where an applicant, or any member of their current or prospective household, has demonstrated serious unacceptable behaviour that, in the view of the SMP makes them at the time of their application, or since their application, unsuitable to be a tenant.

In applying this qualification rule the SMP will decide on the facts of the case whether an applicant will not qualify to be included on the Housing Register due to their (or household member's) serious unacceptable behaviour.

The rule of non-qualification will apply where the SMP is satisfied that an applicant (or a member of their current or prospective household) has demonstrated a serious failure to adhere to the terms of a current or previous social housing or private rented tenancy agreement. This is defined as:

- 1) Failing to maintain any previous social rented or private sector rented property within the terms of their tenancy agreement, or committing acts causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours or others in the area where they live or have previously lived. Non-qualification will apply until the applicant (or a member of their prospective household) has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the SMP, their previous unacceptable conduct is unlikely to reoccur. This may include demonstrating cooperation with support agencies leading to a substantial improvement in behaviour.
- 2) Conduct likely to cause nuisance or annoyance if they were to be offered a tenancy. This is conduct or behavior that does not only relate to a previous social housing or private rented sector tenancy. It may include the circumstances where an applicant, or a member of their current or prospective household, is the subject of actions being taken by any Council (or some other recognised body) on grounds of alleged antisocial behaviour (ASB).
- 3) Rent arrears for their last private rented tenancy in the circumstances where the SMP has obtained information that confirms on the balance of probabilities that a debt is owed. If there is a debt owed it will be for the assessing officer to decide on the facts gathered regarding the level of debt and the reasons for it, whether the applicant should be classified as a non-qualifying. Where it is established that a debt is owed the same rules will apply as per a social housing debt above.
- 4) Circumstances where the applicant, or any member of their household, has assaulted a member of the SMP's staff, whether or not an injunction is being sought, or has been obtained.

Other specific examples of serious unacceptable behavior are:

- a) Being subject to a court order (including an interim order) for breach of tenancy conditions
- b) Conviction for illegal or immoral use of their current or former home
- c) Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors
- d) Committing criminal offences in or near the home and still posing a threat to neighbours or the community such as drug dealing
- e) Being violent towards a partner or members of the family
- f) Allowing the condition of the property to deteriorate
- g) Paying money illegally to obtain a tenancy
- h) Unlawfully subletting their tenancy
- i) Applicants that have been convicted of housing or welfare benefit related fraud, where that conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation Offenders Act 1974.

- j) Having unspent convictions where the assessment concludes that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant due to a significant risk to potential neighbours and/or communities.
- k) An applicant or any member of their household has been responsible for any racial harassment or other hate crime. Racial harassment and Hate Crimes is defined as racist, religiously aggravated, faith, gender, age, disability, and trans phobic or homophobic or gender re-assignment harassment or hate crime. A hate crime or racist incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be racist or hate crime related by the complainant or any other person.

Note: The unacceptable behavior disqualification rule will also apply to applicants currently on the register. An applicant's eligibility to remain on the Housing Register will be kept under review and an applicant may be rendered ineligible should the SMP be satisfied that the rule relating to unacceptable behaviour should be applied to their case.

Any new application will normally only be reconsidered where, as a guideline, the SMP will consider whether there has been no reasonable cause for complaint or concern against the applicant (or members of their prospective household) for a period of at least 12 months. Any SMP partner can consider a new application and an assessment is not restricted to the partner Housing Association who had previously evicted the applicant.

Note: Where an applicant has resolved their behaviour to the satisfaction of the SMP it may still be the case that a Housing Association where the unacceptable behaviour occurred, might decide they will not rehouse their former tenant. This will not prevent an applicant from being considered for housing by another Housing Association. A decision of a Housing Association to refuse to consider a former tenant will be made only where there are exceptional circumstances relating to their eviction and all SMP partners agree that applicants will not be excluded routinely on the basis that they had previously evicted an applicant for rent arrears or another breach of tenancy condition.

The details for how the SMP assessing partner will apply the unacceptable behaviour test is set out in appendix 7.

Non qualification rule 4: Financial resources

Applicants who are considered to have sufficient financial resources to buy or rent suitable accommodation will not qualify for the Housing Register.

Sufficient financial resources

With regard to finances, single and joint applicants will not qualify to join the register if:

- 1) Applicant/s have a total household income of £60,000 gross per year, or
- 2) Have resources of over £30,000 from investments or savings.

This rule has been adopted because applicants with income, investments or savings at or above this level will mean that they do not qualify for charitable housing assistance from a partner Registered Provider that has charitable rules and objectives.

These financial limits will be reviewed every two years in line with the financial market.

Dependent children or non-dependent adult children's income will not be considered as part of the household's total income assessment.

'Sufficient financial resources' includes any assets or investments even if they are not immediately available to the applicant.

In applying this qualification rule the SMP will disregard any lump sum received by a member of the armed forces when leaving the armed forces or received as compensation for an injury or disability on active service.

Although this rule will mean applicants assessed as having sufficient financial resources cannot join the Housing Register, it does not prevent them being considered for any low-cost part ownership, or full ownership schemes. On request, information can be given as to which Housing Associations or developers are currently operating such schemes in the Select Move area and how applications can be made.

Non qualification rule 5: Homeownership, or legal interest in homeownership

An applicant cannot qualify for the housing register if they or their partner own a residential property in the UK or elsewhere. Applicants who have been the owner of a residential property within the last 5 years will be required to provide proof of the proceeds from the sale and of the disposal of any proceeds. Where proceeds from any sale have been spent recklessly and, as a result, takes an applicant's financial resources below the disqualification level set, an applicant can still be determined as not qualifying for the housing register.

Exemptions to the financial resources and homeownership qualification rules

Applicants who do not qualify under the homeownership or financial resources rules may be considered as an exception if:

- a) If as a result of a divorce settlement a Court has ordered that an applicant may not reside in the former matrimonial or civil partnership home in which they still have a legal interest for a period which is likely to exceed 5 years.
- b) Where there are large families on benefits, including disability benefits, where their total household income exceeds £60,000 a year
- c) Where someone is a homeowner and is statutory homeless due to domestic abuse and whose property has not yet been sold. A decision will be made as to whether to treat this as an exemption based on the facts and circumstances of the case.

- d) The applicant has a substantial disability, and their current home is not suitable for their specific needs.
- e) Applications from owner occupiers where a Select Move Council has a statutory duty to assist e.g. homelessness or where the applicants housing needs is able to be met through sheltered housing and there is a surplus of such accommodation in the Select Move area.

Exemption d) is intended to cover situations where a person owns their own home but where it is agreed that they are no longer able to manage in it due to their advancing years, or due to a substantial disability that makes living in their home impracticable and where selling is unlikely to provide sufficient funds to purchase alternative accommodation that would be suitable for their needs.

Non qualification rule 6: Fraud or giving False Information

Applicants who are found to have withheld or given false information may be removed from the register and will not be able to reapply for a period of 12 months. Decisions to remove the person from the register will be made based on the seriousness of the attempted fraud or false information given including an assessment of why information was withheld.

How Select Move will apply this rule if it is suspected that false information has been provided, or important information has been withheld, is set out in appendix 8.

Dis-qualification rule 7: Refusal of 2 reasonable offers in a 12-month period

Any applicant who refuses 2 reasonable offers within a 12-month period will be disqualified from the housing register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 12 months (Note: Applicants owed any of the statutory homeless duties will only be made one suitable offer and a refusal will mean that their priority for being owed a statutory homeless duty will be removed).

The 2 offer disqualification rule is intended to tackle the problem of some applicants making a successful bid and then reusing the property offered, which has the impact of increasing the time it takes to re-let times vacant homes. The SMP will determine whether an offer was reasonable for an applicant to accept using the reasonable offer criteria set out at appendix 4.

How exceptional circumstances will be considered for any of the qualification rules

Select Move retains the ability, in exceptional circumstances, to exercise its discretion when applying any of the qualification rules adopted. It is for the applicant to request that discretion should be applied to their case for exceptional circumstances. A request for a review of a decision that an applicant does not meet the qualification rule will be taken as a request for any exceptional circumstances to be considered. Where requested Select Move will consider whether the applicant's circumstances (or those of a member of the applicant's household) are so exceptional that a qualification rule should be waived.

The applicant will receive a written decision on their claim for exceptional circumstances to be applied and, where that decision is that the case is not considered to be exceptional, reasons will be given.

Select Move cannot waive the eligibility rules for any applicant who is not allowed to access social housing under the immigration and 'persons from abroad' rules set by Central Government.

In deciding whether an applicant's circumstances are exceptional Select Move will fully consider the Equality Act 2010 and Children Act 2004. With regard to the Equality Act the SMP will specifically consider:

- a) Whether the person, or a member of their household, meets the definition for one or more of the 9 protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010
- b) If we agree that the applicant or a member of their household comes under the definition for a protected characteristic, Select Move will fully comply with section 149 of 2010 Equality Act and ensure that it has obtained all relevant information relating to the applicant's protected characteristic and will consider that if they were not able to qualify for the scheme, whether this would have an exceptionally detrimental impact on the person with that protected characteristic, and
- c) Ensure that any decision that the applicant's circumstances are not exceptional will be a decision that is a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate objectives for the policy.

Section 3: Applying to join the Housing Register

How to apply

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.

People wishing to join the register must apply on-line through:

<https://www.selectmove.co.uk/HouseholdRegistrationForm>

Any applicant who may need help in completing their on-line application can call the partner assessing their application where they will be guided through the process of making their application on-line. Select Move partners can be contacted on 0800 655 6785

There is free access to the 'internet' at libraries, and at some community facilities. A home visit or office appointment can be offered when an applicant has no access to the 'internet' or is unable to use the 'internet'. Alternatively, an applicant can be signposted to other services, or other departments, that can support the person to complete their application.

The partner assessing the application will help any person who is likely to have difficulty in making an application to join the Scheme. This assistance will include:

1. Help to complete the application form
2. Explaining what evidence might be required to determine any eligibility and qualification rules
3. Explaining what evidence might be required to determine the degree of priority to be given to an application

The Select Move housing application webpages contain a list of the supporting documents that an applicant must provide in order to progress an application.

Once the application has been received there may be a need for additional information. If so, an applicant will receive a phone call, email or letter asking for the additional information needed and explaining how it can be provided.

Any application forms that are not fully completed or where verification evidence has not been provided, cannot be processed meaning that an applicant will not be able to access the housing register until the information is fully completed and assessed.

Select move will make enquiries it considers necessary in order to verify and assess an application for housing. This may involve contacting previous landlords, health or medical advisors, police etc.

The partner processing the application will do so within a reasonable period of time (relative to the particular facts given in the application) after all documentation has been received from an applicant.

If accepted onto the register the applicant will be informed of:

- 1) The band they have been placed in (this determines priority)
- 2) The date of application (may be used to determine priority within the band allocated)
- 3) The size and type of properties for which they can bid
- 4) Their application reference number (applicants will need this to bid)
- 5) How to seek a review against their banding if they think it is wrong.

If an application to join the housing register is refused the applicant will be informed in writing and will have a right to review the decision made.

Copies of all adverse decisions will be made available for a reasonable period of time for collection by the applicant, or by someone on their behalf, at the assessing Select Move partner's main office where an applicant has not provided either an email address or postal address.

Prisoners can register in the 6-month period prior to their date of release if they meet the qualification rules but will not be able to bid for a property until 1 month prior to release.

The date a band will be allocated

The band start date is the date that the housing register application was received for assessment, unless an applicant's housing need and/or circumstances changes and any reassessment results in the applicant being placed in a higher band. In these circumstances they will not retain the date they were awarded the lower band as the higher band reflects a higher level of housing need, therefore their date for the higher band will be the date they were awarded that band for that higher assessed housing need.

Note for eligible homeless applicants who meet the qualification rules to join the Housing Register the following will apply with regard to their band start date:

- a) Owed a section 195(2) Prevention of homelessness duty – Band date is the date the duty was owed and not the date of the homelessness application
- b) Owed a section 189B (2) Relief of homelessness duty – If an applicant has not been owed a prevention duty then the band date is the date the relief duty is owed and not the date of the homelessness application. If the applicant was owed a prevention duty which ended because they became homeless and they are then owed a relief duty, the effective date is the date the prevention duty was owed.
- c) Owed the Main section 193(2) duty – Band date is the date the Relief of homelessness duty was owed and not the date the Main duty was owed. This is because to start the date at the date the Main duty was owed would

- disadvantage an applicant by 56 days who has been found to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless
- d) Circumstances where the relief duty has ended, and the applicant is assessed at this point as not being in priority need - Band date is the date the Relief of homelessness duty is owed (or the date the prevention duty was owed if the applicant had been owed a prevention duty before being owed the relief duty) and not the date that the Relief duty is brought to an end.
 - e) Circumstances where the relief duty has ended, and the applicant is assessed at that point as not being owed a main duty due to being intentionally homeless - Band date is the date the Relief of homelessness duty is owed (or the date the prevention duty was owed if the applicant had been owed a prevention duty before being owed the relief duty) and not the date that the Relief duty is brought to an end.
 - f) Where the applicant becomes homeless unintentionally within 2 years of accepting a private rented sector offer (PRSO), offered to bring the main section 193 homelessness duty to an end, the effective date will be the date of the new application.

Assessing Applications

In order to assess an applicant's housing need and their place on the Housing Register the policy has adopted a 'needs based' banding system detailed in section 4 below.

Any band awarded reflects an applicant's housing need with the higher the band awarded reflecting the greater level of assessed housing need.

Applicants will be required to sign a declaration, or to give informed consent, to confirm their understanding that:

- a. The information given is correct and that they will notify SMP of any change in their circumstances.
- b. Enquiries will be made concerning their eligibility for housing and level of priority.
- c. Information will be provided to other partner organisations that are part of the scheme.

Once an applicant provides information, the SMP will process that information under Article 6 GDPR. The processing is necessary under the 'Public Task' purpose and is necessary for the SMP to perform a task in the public interest or for its official functions, in this case to meet its legal responsibility to assess housing applications, and we are satisfied that the task or function has a clear basis in law.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all the information requested to assess their circumstances, and to provide any supporting information or documents that are requested. Incomplete applications will not be made active until such time as the SMP is satisfied that it has in its possession all of the information it requires to complete its assessment.

All incomplete applications will be cancelled after a period of 28 days measured from the date further information has been requested. If cancelled this does not prevent the applicant making a subsequent application at a later date, although in such cases the applicant's effective date of registration would not be backdated to the date of the earlier application.

SMP may request information or a reference from an applicant's current or previous social landlord and may, depending on whether the application gives rise to any concern, request a reference from the most recent private sector landlord (or any other recent private sector landlord) if the applicant is or has been a private sector tenancy.

Where a social or private landlord does not reply within 28 days a reminder will be sent, and if still not forthcoming within 14 days of the reminder being sent any other information or records available will be checked to try to determine whether there are any concerns regarding the way an applicant may have conducted their tenancy. An applicant should not be disadvantaged if, despite every effort, it is not possible to obtain a reference from their current or previous landlord.

All applications are subject to verification checks and these may be applied:

- At the point of initial application
- Following any change of circumstance notified to the SMP by the applicant
- Following any routine validation audits
- Following an annual review of the application
- At the point of an offer of accommodation
- At the point of letting

Where considered relevant, and based on an applicant's circumstances, an affordability assessment may be undertaken based on an applicant's household income and expenditure. This is to determine their ability to sustain a tenancy financially. The SMP aims to agree a common definition for assessing affordability across the partnership to ensure consistency in decision making.

Checks into any court cases or unspent criminal convictions

All applicants and members of their prospective household will be requested to disclose any pending court cases or unspent criminal convictions.

SMP may use any information disclosed (or any other information obtained during the assessment or following registration) to ascertain whether the applicant should be disqualified from joining, or from remaining on the housing register, after applying the serious unacceptable behaviour rule.

Spent convictions are not required to be disclosed and will not be taken into account in assessing a person's eligibility to join the register. The assessment will consider whether there is evidence of any current serious unacceptable behavior regardless of whether a person has been convicted in the past for that behavior.

If the SMP decide that, on the information obtained during the assessment process, there is a real pressing need for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or further information from the Probation Service, a supplementary request for information and declaration will be sent to the applicant asking for more details and for permission from the applicant for the SMP to make the relevant checks. Failure to give permission may result in the application not being made live whilst the SMP consider the information available to it.

Information gained will not automatically exclude an applicant from the register. Information received may also be used to make informed decisions about the suitability of any property that may be offered.

All assessments will be carried out in accordance with data protection and information sharing policies and other legal requirements.

Who can be included in the Application?

Joint applications will be accepted and will be treated as one application. The housing need of the full household will be considered in assessing housing need. However, in relation to the Housing Associations that are part of this policy the individual association will decide whether to allow a joint tenancy depending on their own adopted rules.

Applicants should only include persons on their application who will be a permanent member of their household and who will be occupying the accommodation offered as their only or principal home.

Anyone who might usually live with an applicant, or who might reasonably be expected to live with an applicant, can feature as part of the application. A usual household member is a person who normally lives with an applicant. People who usually live with the applicant but are temporarily absent due to circumstances beyond their control (for example, they are in prison, care of a local authority, staying in hospital, away serving in the armed forces), can also be considered as a usual household member at the discretion of the SMP partnership and depending on the facts presented. People who do not currently live with the applicant may only be included if the applicant satisfies the SMP that they might reasonably be expected to do so.

Specifically, a person's housing application can include the following household members:

- a) Spouses or Civil Partners where the applicant lives with and/or intends to live with their Spouse or Civil Partner.
- b) Partners where the applicant is currently cohabiting with a member of the same or opposite sex.
- c) Children who reside with and are dependent upon the applicant. Children are defined as under 18 for these purposes. Where there is any dispute as to whether children reside with and are dependent upon the applicant, the

SMP will apply the test in Section 189(1)(b) of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to decide this question (see below).

- d) A Carer where the assessing officer has agreed that on the evidence there is a need for a live in Carer. The Carer is a person who provides or intends to provide care for another adult. It is either a relative or friend who assists another person in their day-to-day life. This is different from someone who offers care professionally, or through a voluntary organisation. Note, even if a carer is in receipt of Carer's Allowance this does not necessarily mean that it is necessary for them to reside with the person who is being cared for. An application to include a carer will be assessed based on whether there is a need to provide overnight support. In these circumstances the applicant must provide supporting evidence from other agencies e.g., Social Care or a Health professional.
- e) Any other household member such as adult sons or daughters who are currently living with the applicant. Decisions on whether any other adult relative can be included will be at the discretion of the appropriate senior officer acting for the SMP.
- f) Note: Individuals can only be included on 1 application. Where someone has an application in their own name (or with a partner) they cannot also be included as a household member (for example, a non-dependent child) on another application unless for example, if they are a victim of domestic abuse. In these circumstances they should remove themselves from their previous application.
- g) Family members who do not currently reside in the UK cannot be added to a Housing Register application

Joint tenancies are normally granted by a Housing Association where applicants have a long-term commitment, for example, married, or unmarried couples, or civil partners. This decision is for the relevant Housing Association offering accommodation, who will decide whether to allow a joint tenancy depending on their tenancy management rules.

Households with access to children/shared residency order or Child Arrangement Orders

As part of the assessment process the SMP will record whether the applicant claims to have children that live with them part of the week and whether or not this arrangement is set by the court or not.

The SMP will adopt the test set out in Section 189(1)(b) of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to decide whether any child both lives with and is dependent on the applicant. Unless this test is passed an applicant will only be able to be considered for the size of accommodation relevant to their circumstances.

Following this assessment there will be cases where it is agreed that children live with the applicant on a 'shared arrangement' even though they do not exclusively live with the applicant.

In these cases, even though the child/children can be included as part of the application there will be a number of factors that will be considered when deciding what size accommodation can be offered. These factors include:

- a) The ability of the applicant to afford the rent with or without help from benefits
- b) The availability and popularity of family housing in any area that an applicant expresses a preference to live in. For example, a partner housing association may be willing to be more flexible where a vacancy relates to a flat than a house as long as the rent is assessed as being affordable.

The requirement to inform the SMP of any change of circumstances

Applicants are required to inform the SMP of any changes in their circumstances, which may affect their housing application.

Examples of a change in circumstances include but are not limited to:

- a. A change of address or contact details, for either themselves or members of their household.
- b. A change in their medical condition or disability (either existing or newly acquired).
- c. Additional family members or other people they wish to add to their application (It will be for the SMP to decide whether they will allow additional people to join the application).
- d. Any family member or any other person on the application who has left the accommodation, and
- e. Any significant changes in income, savings or assets, which may require a reassessment under the income and savings qualification rule.

Where following a change in an applicant's circumstances this results in a change to the applicant's application or banding, they will be informed in writing. The onus is on applicants to inform the SMP when there is a relevant change in their circumstances.

Note, on allocation of accommodation, verification checks into the applicant's current circumstances are likely to be carried out again by the Housing Association that own the property being advertised. This is to ensure that the allocation is being made in accordance with the applicant's current housing circumstances and needs at the time of a prospective offer. Therefore, a failure to notify the SMP of changes in circumstances may lead to an offer of housing being withdrawn and the application suspended whilst changes that were not notified to the SMP are assessed.

Applications from elected Council members, or staff of a Council's housing service, or SMP partner Housing Association Board Members, and staff

Elected Councillors, or Housing Association Board Members, cannot be involved in assessing housing applications or the allocation of housing. However, this does not prevent elected Councillors seeking or providing information on behalf of applicants.

In order to ensure that SMP is treating all applicants fairly, any application for housing from a Councillor, Board Member, or employee of any of the 3 Council's Housing Departments or SMP partner Housing Associations will be assessed in the normal way, but an offer of housing must be approved by the lead housing officer for the Council where the advertised home is located, and the lead officer for the social housing partner advertising the vacant home.

Canvassing is not allowed in any circumstances by, or on behalf of a Councillor, or member of staff.

Reviewing the Register

Every applicant on the Register will have their application reviewed annually, or more frequently, as decided by the SMP, in order to manage the administration of the register. An annual review (renewal), message will be sent to an applicant prompting them to renew their application. Each applicant will be asked to agree to renewing their application and to check that their circumstances have not changed. If an applicant has not responded after 28 days a second reminder will be sent by email (or by letter, if the applicant does not have an email account). If no response is received to the renewal reminder then the application will be cancelled.

Cancelling Applications

An application will be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- At the request of an applicant
- Where an applicant does not respond to an application review, within the specified time set out in any correspondence sent to them
- Where any Housing Association (or Council outside of the Select Move area) has housed the applicant (unless it is assessed that the applicants' housing circumstances would still qualify for a priority band award based on their housing need, but this is unlikely to be the case).
- When a tenant of social housing completes a mutual exchange.
- Where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address
- Where the applicant has died
- Where, at the housing application or renewal stage, an applicant has not supplied information requested within 28 days.
- Where an applicant already registered becomes ineligible or is disqualified under the rules adopted for this policy.
- Where the applicant buys a property either through the Right to Buy or through the open market or inherits a property.
- Where an applicant has refused 2 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.

Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of that decision.

Where an application has been cancelled, consideration will be given to reinstating the application where the applicant contacts Select Move within three months of the cancellation date; and the applicant is able to provide evidence of good reason for not responding within the required timescales.

Deliberate worsening of circumstances

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately made their housing situation worse in order to gain a higher priority on the register, the assessment of their needs will be based on the circumstances before the change in their situation brought about by their actions to deliberately worsen their circumstances.

Examples of deliberately worsening circumstances are:

- Applicants who have allowed family members or others to move into their property, who previously had suitable accommodation or the financial means to secure their own accommodation, and this has resulted in the property being overcrowded.
- Applicants who have moved from previously suitable, or more suitable accommodation, which was affordable and reasonable for them to continue to occupy, into a less suitable property which would result in a band A, B or C award.
- Homeowners who have transferred their property to another family member within the last 5 years from the date they make their application to the housing register.
- Applicants who have given up affordable and suitable private rented accommodation which they are able to maintain, to move in with other relatives or friends, creating a situation of overcrowding.
- Requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a notice to leave their accommodation.

These are examples only. There may be other circumstances where the SMP decide that an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances

The Review Procedure

Under the housing legislation an applicant has a legal right to request a review of any of the following decisions reached by a Council or partner:

- a) A decision that an applicant is ineligible, or not a qualifying person to join the Housing Register.
- b) A decision regarding which band an applicant has been awarded.
- c) The priority date granted for the band awarded.
- d) To remove an applicant from the Housing Register.

- e) Any decision about the facts of the case that has been used to assess their application including the decision the SMP has made on who can be included in the application.
- f) Where an applicant considers that a decision has been reached based on incorrect information.

How a request for a review will be dealt with

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. For decisions about the refusal of a suitable offer made to end a homelessness duty the relevant local authority will deal with any such decisions.

- 1) A review must be requested within 28 days of the date of the letter advising the applicant of the decision on their application.
- 2) The request for review should be made in writing by email or letter addressed to the Council for the area which you have been registered. The addresses are:

The Review Officer
Housing Applications and Lettings Team
Chorley Council
Civic Offices, Union St, Chorley PR7 1AL

The Review Officer
Housing Applications and Lettings Team
Preston Council
Town Hall, Lancaster Rd, Preston PR1 2RL

The Review Officer
Housing Applications and Lettings Team
South Ribble Council
Civic Centre, W Paddock, Leyland PR25 1DH

- 3) The applicant should give reasons why they wish to have the decision reviewed so that the SMP can ensure that the request falls under the statutory review request criteria.
- 4) Upon receipt of a request for a review the Reviewing Officer will send an acknowledgement letter explaining the review process and procedure to be followed.
- 5) The review decision will be carried out by an officer who is more senior to the person who made the original decision.
- 6) An applicant may be asked to attend an interview and, if so, can be accompanied by an advisor or friend.

- 7) 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 decision. 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.
- 8) 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. However, this is a target timescale and may be longer depending on operational pressures.
- 9) There is no right to request a review of a review decision.

Section 4: How an applicant's housing needs and circumstances are assessed

The Banding system

The demand for social housing exceeds supply in the SMP area and therefore this policy prioritises the housing of applicants assessed as being in the greatest need. Once registered many applicants will still unfortunately not have sufficient housing need to be offered a property.

A banding system will normally be used to decide when to make an offer of accommodation and to whom, unless the SMP applies the direct lets procedure as set out in this policy.

The SMP has chosen to adopt a simple and transparent system creating 4 queues where people will be ranked by date order in each queue as long as they qualify to join the housing register.

Band A – Urgent housing need to move: these are applicants that are owed a statutory award of 'reasonable preference' but whom the SMP believes should also be awarded 'additional preference' based on their urgent housing need.

Band B – High priority statutory housing need to move: these are applicants that are owed a statutory award of 'reasonable preference' under the policy and have been awarded band B priority based on their assessed high housing need.

Band C – Identified statutory housing need to move: these are applicants that are owed a statutory award of 'reasonable preference' under the policy and have been awarded band C priority based on their assessed statutory housing need.

Band D - Applicants who do not meet an identified statutory housing need as defined in Bands A-C will be able to qualify for Band D.

The following section provides details for the 4 bands an applicant may be awarded based on the SMP's assessment of their housing need. How the policy defines and assesses housing need is described below. Where there are further details, beyond the details set out below for how the housing need criteria will be assessed, these are set out in appendices. For example, the detail for how the SMP will assess applications where it is claimed there is a housing need based on the impact of an applicant's current housing on their physical or mental health, is detailed in appendix 5.

It is important to note that applicants will be placed in the appropriate band following an assessment that their housing need meets the threshold for that band. An applicant who qualifies under more than one of the housing need criteria will be awarded the highest priority they are entitled to under the criteria. They will not be awarded a higher band just because they meet more than one housing need criteria. For example, an applicant who meets 2 Housing Need criteria for Band B will still only be awarded band B and not Band A.

THE BANDING SYSTEM AND THE ADOPTED HOUSING NEED CRITERIA FOR EACH OF THE 3 ADOPTED BANDS

BAND A: EXCEPTIONALLY URGENT NEED TO MOVE

1: Exceptional or medical impact with an immediate need to move

Where an applicant (or a member of their household) is unable to continue to occupy their current accommodation due to exceptional medical need or disability. *(See appendix 5 for how band A medical will be assessed and awarded)*

2: Exceptionally urgent need to move due to violence, harassment, or protection issues

In regard to assessments under the criteria the SMP Council will assess private sector residents and SMP Housing Association will assess their own current tenants.

Not every circumstance that may present can be captured under this category therefore the list below set out examples for when an award may be considered. This category is intended to cover exceptional need to move for Domestic Abuse, MARAC, Racial, Homophobic or Transgender Harassment, witness or child protection, private rented or social housing management transfers. The circumstances, however, must be assessed as exceptional with an immediate/critical need to move:

- a) Applicants who the SMP agree need to move immediately due to domestic violence or threats of violence or abuse threats from an ex-partner or family member they do not live with, or extreme threats of violence, extreme harassment, or other extreme circumstances deemed to significantly affect a household's welfare and wellbeing. Note applicants would be encouraged to present as homeless where the SMP is of the view that it isn't safe for them to remain in their home. If an SMP Council accept a homelessness duty an applicant will be banded according to the homelessness banding criteria.

For any Housing Association tenant, the expectation is that, where it is safe to do so, a like for like management transfer would be granted or an emergency decant provided whilst a suitable transfer can be arranged.

- b) Exceptional circumstances due to significant problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling in the social or private rented sector and there is an extreme risk to the tenant or their family's safety if they remain in the dwelling or area.
- c) For applications in circumstances where there is a critical and serious threat to the well-being of a child and their accommodation is a major contributory factor to that risk. This will be in circumstances where the relevant manager in Children's Services or equivalent assesses the level of risk exposure in relation to the child or children remaining in the current property as being so critical that no other reasonable options in relation to accommodation are available to protect the child.

3: Band A: Unfit or unsatisfactory housing – exceptionally urgent cases

There are 3 circumstances where Band A may be awarded:

1) Band A for applicants without access at all to any of the following facilities:

No access to:

- a) A bath or shower
- b) A toilet
- c) Cooking facilities
- d) Running hot water supplies
- e) Electric/gas needed for essential activities

Applicants who have access to shared facilities re cooking; bathroom and toilet will not qualify under these criteria.

This banding award does not include applicants sleeping rough or with no fixed abode. They will be dealt with under the homelessness criteria in this banding policy.

Any decision to award Band A for this category will take into account the reasons why the applicant does not have access to these facilities and whether this is a temporary or long-term situation.

2) Band A for applicants where unsatisfactory housing is having an exceptional impact.

Applicants who currently occupy a private sector property which has at least one Category 1 Hazard notification from a partner Council's Environmental Health Service (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and where a Prohibition Order has been served or is intended to be served under the Housing Act 2004 and the effect of the Prohibition Order is likely to mean that the applicant(s) will lose the use of their home on a permanent basis. The relevant conditions at the property must be life threatening, or in the assessing Council's view present an immediate threat of serious injury to the occupant(s)

This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a period considered to be reasonable by the SMP, and the household are not able to afford to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative private sector accommodation.

Note - this category will not include Housing Association tenancies because there is a legal requirement on social landlords to urgently remedy defects that pose a risk to their tenants

3) Band A due to demolition or Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) cases.

Where the applicant's property is subject to demolition or subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order for redevelopment

4: Band A: Severe Overcrowding - People currently living in severely overcrowded accommodation defined as needing three or more bedrooms as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy.

Where an applicant's household is severely overcrowded which is defined as requiring 3 or more additional bedrooms to reach the bedroom standard and where an SMP Council has either:

- a) In the case of a private sector has issued a prohibition order due to an assessed significant risk to the household's safety if they were to remain, or
- b) Intend to issue a prohibition order due to an assessed significant risk to the household's safety, or
- c) In the case of a Housing Association tenancy where a prohibition order is not likely to be issued this will be assessed by the Manager responsible for the Allocation policy who will decide whether Band A should be awarded because of the significant risk to the household's safety if they were to remain.

5: Armed Forces who meet the following criteria

Applicants with urgent housing need and have access to no other accommodation who:

- a) Are serving (and will soon leave) the regular forces and are suffering from serious injury, illness, mental ill health, or disability which is attributable to the person's service
- b) Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service or
- c) Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service

6: Applicants owed a main section 193(2) homelessness duty by a SMP partner Council, or are owed a section 189(B) relief duty and would be likely to be owed a main duty if that relief duty were to end unsuccessfully

7: To release a specially adapted property

Where a partner tenant does not require a specially adapted property for disabled use, and there is demand for its use. This would not include cases where the property to be released contains minor adaptations. Note a Housing Association SMP partner may decide to facilitate a transfer through a managed move outside of the SMP policy.

8: Care Leavers

Care leavers aged 18 – 21 whose care placement is coming to an end and they are assessed as being able to manage a tenancy providing they have been looked after and accommodated by Lancashire County Council either

within the County Council's area or out of area, and the County Council has a duty of care accepted under the Children Act.

Applicants are awarded this category in accordance with protocols between the partner SMP 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.

9: Move on from Supported Housing

Applicants living in a short-term commissioned Supported Housing project that come under an SMP approved list of 'move on partners' who are assessed as ready to move on and where there is no other suitable option for meeting their housing need other than social housing. Appendix X *(to be added by SMP)* sets out the current approved move on partners for each of the 3 SMP Council areas. This list may change over time.

Note: Any applicant in band A may be subject to a direct offer at any time in order to resolve the very exceptional housing need to move that has resulted in the Band A award. Where a direct offer hasn't been made after 10 weeks the applicant will have their application reviewed to ensure that the applicant is expressing an interest on suitable vacancies advertised. Where the applicant fails to express an interest (and suitable properties have been advertised in that period) their band placement will be formally reviewed and may be removed, or in appropriate circumstances, expressions of interest will be placed on their behalf.

For homeless duty applicants awarded band A the Local Authority has the discretion to make a suitable offer at any time.

BAND B – URGENT/HIGH NEED TO MOVE

1: Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy

2: Severe impact medical need

Where an applicant (or a member of their household) is living in accommodation with a severe, long term, medical conditions (chronic or progressive) or severe disability that means they urgently need to move because their home is assessed as being highly unsuitable and is directly detrimental to the applicants' physical or mental health.

(See appendix 5 for how band B medical will be assessed and awarded)

3: Unsatisfactory housing conditions or fitness

Private sector tenants that the relevant Council has determined, following an inspection and report from a partner Council's Environmental Health Service, that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety fitness rating and the assessing officer is 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 considerable risk to the applicant's health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of 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, and the household are not able to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative private sector accommodation

4: Former Regular Armed Forces Applicants

Members of the Armed Forces persons who meet the following criteria:

- a) They are serving in the regular forces and will be discharged within 6 months and have served for 5 years or more, or
- b) They were serving in the regular forces and they apply to join the housing register within 1 year of discharge, and
- c) Had been previously living in the SMP district immediately before joining the armed forces or since leaving

And d and e below must also apply

- d) They did not leave the armed forces as a result of a dishonorable discharge, and
- e) They do not own or have a legal interest in any other property

5: Band B for a statutory homeless duty defined as:

- 1) Applicants owed a section 195 (2) prevention of homelessness duty and the applicant is, at the point of that duty being accepted, considered likely to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless if the prevention duty and any subsequent relief duty were to end unsuccessfully.

6: Insecurity that risks homelessness

A pregnant woman or applicant with a child or children who are sharing a home with family who are not part of their household and where:

- a) They have no ownership or tenancy rights, and the arrangement is short term and very insecure and only available whilst the applicant is actively seeking an offer of social housing or alternative accommodation with friends or in the private rented sector, and
- b) They were owed a prevention of homelessness duty as they were assessed as likely to become homeless within 56 days, and that duty has ended because they have been allowed to remain at home whilst they bid for social housing with their Band B priority and it is likely that they can remain for at least a year, and
- c) The family member with the interest in the home has agreed to allow the applicant to remain for at least a year.

7: To provide or receive essential care

Band B will be awarded in the following circumstances:

- a) 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.
- b) Approved foster carers and adopters who require larger accommodation on the recommendation of children's services.

BAND C – ALL OTHER APPLICANTS ASSESSED AS HAVING A STATUTORY REASONABLE PREFERENCE BASED ON THEIR ASSESSED HOUSING NEED**1: Band C for a statutory homeless duty defined as:**

- 1) Applicants where the section 189(B) Relief duty has been brought to an end and an applicant has been assessed at that point as being intentionally homeless (and hasn't been disqualified under the unacceptable behaviour disqualification rule).
- 2) Applicants owed the 193 C (4) Main duty where the Prevention or Relief duty was ended by the Council due to their deliberate non-cooperation
- 3) Applicants owed a section 189B (2) Relief duty by one of the 3 SMP partner Councils and the applicant is, at the point of that 189B duty being accepted, considered unlikely to be in priority need, or likely to be intentionally homeless.
- 4) Applicants owed a section 195 (2) Prevention of homelessness duty and unlikely to be owed a main duty if the prevention or relief duty is unsuccessful.
- 5) Applicants where the section 189(B) Relief of homelessness duty has been brought to an end and the applicant is determined to be homeless but not in priority need and therefore not owed a Main homeless duty.

Note: For an award of Band C for Homelessness

Any band C banding for applicants found to be not in priority need or band C for being intentionally homeless when a relief of homelessness duty have been brought to an unsuccessful conclusion, is dependent on the applicant remaining homeless. If their circumstances change and they are no longer homeless the banding will be removed. If an offer of accommodation is made and, upon verification, the assessment is that the applicant is no longer homeless that offer would be withdrawn.

2: 'Right to move applicants'

Existing social tenants of accommodation in England who the SMP have assessed as qualifying under the Government's Right to Move regulations. Allocation to applicants who qualify for this award is limited to a maximum of 1% of all lettings.

3: Overcrowded and deficient by one bedroom

Where an applicant's household is overcrowded defined as requiring 1 additional bedroom to reach the bedroom standard

4: Under-occupying SMP tenants

- a) A tenant of a SMP partner housing association under occupying family housing by two or more bedrooms in accordance with the criteria in this policy for measuring over and under occupying.
- b) A tenant of a SMP partner housing association seeking a move to non-family housing that will free up a house to enable use by a family.

5: Applicants with dependent children living in accommodation that lacks level access

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. Applicants in this category who are housed into Social Housing will not be eligible to join the housing register for 12 months from the date their tenancy commences unless their circumstances have changed since they moved in, for example if they accepted an upper floor flat but their circumstances have changed because they have become pregnant.

BAND D - APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT MEET AN IDENTIFIED STATUTORY HOUSING NEED AS DEFINED IN BANDS A-C

This band will contain all other applicants who meet the rules to qualify for the Housing Register but do not have an assessed statutory housing need for being owed a statutory reasonable preference as defined in the criteria set out for an award of bands A-C.

Applicants in Band D will be able to bid for advertised properties, but it is not expected that many will be successful given the shortage of social housing and the number of applicant's bidding from a higher band.

The exception is for Band D applicant who qualify for sheltered or older person's housing who will be allowed to bid on sheltered properties and not general needs properties. There is likely to be a reasonable number of low demand sheltered or older person homes available to applicants in Band D.

The verification and assessment for Band D applicants is intended to be 'light touch' at the point of application but if an applicant is successful in bidding full checks and verification will be undertaken before an offer of accommodation is made.

Quota system

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

Band A	50%
Band B	30%
Band C	20%

This will be reviewed after 12 months of the new policy.

Advertising Properties

Choice based lettings is about the applicants being given more choice over where they would like to live. Properties will be advertised, and applicants will be able to indicate the properties for which they want to be considered by 'bidding'. Once the bidding process closes a shortlist will be compiled and the property allocated will be based on the banding priority of the applications and the time they have waited as long as they meet the criteria set out in the advertisement.

It should be noted that in certain circumstances a Registered Provider Housing Association might apply their own additional rules regarding the allocation of accommodation but the aim of the SMP is to minimize the number of circumstances where a Housing Association would wish to apply its own rules. With this in mind the SMP will endeavor to agree a definition for affordability based on an applicant's income and expenditure.

Adverts will clearly indicate any restrictions on bidding (e.g., where properties have been adapted and/or are specifically for people with disabilities) and will detail any particular criteria that apply (e.g., any affordability criteria).

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 (the age criteria will depend on the adopted rule of each SMP partner Housing Association). 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.

The bidding and selection process

Properties are advertised as and when a notice is received and therefore will be uploaded at any time between a Monday and Friday to the SMP website. Each listed property will have a closing date within which the customers will need to register their bid.

All other properties advertised on Select Move will be advertised for a minimum of 5 days including weekends and bank holidays. An applicant may express an interest through bidding on any advertised property that meets their needs and are able to place an unlimited number of bids in each weekly each bid cycle.

In the circumstances where there are two households with the same band and registration date that bid for a property a decision to offer the property will be based on the household who is assessed as being most suitable for that property.

Offers of accommodation

This section sets out the procedure that will apply to making an offer of accommodation once an applicant has been selected from a shortlist of successful applicants bidding for that property.

For the purpose of this policy an “allocation” is defined as occurring when the Council nominates a person to be an assured tenant (encompassing fixed term and affordable tenancies) of social rented housing held by a Registered Provider operating in the SMP area.

The law requires Registered Providers to publish rules and policies about how housing allocations will be made. Applicants should consult individual Registered Providers about their rules and policies concerning allocation of social rented housing if they have any questions concerning an individual registered provider’s rules.

The size of a home that an applicant may be entitled to is set out in this policy although some housing associations may adopt their own rules on the size of property an applicant is entitled to which may not use the same criteria set out in this policy.

Once selected and, prior to an offer being made, the Housing Register and Allocations Team will carry out a further verification of their eligibility and priority. In certain situations, the offer will not be made, or if made may be withdrawn if:

- Since joining the scheme an applicant has become ineligible.
- On verification of the applicants’ details, the priority band has been incorrectly awarded due to the information received by the applicant, or due to mistakes in the assessment of the application itself.
- The applicants’ circumstances have changed since the priority band was awarded and the applicant is no longer entitled to the same level of priority.
- The Housing Association landlord for the property being advertised has evidenced housing management reason not to offer the property to the person selected.

The Housing Association who owns or manages the vacant property that has been advertised will be responsible for contacting the successful applicant. They should, where possible, provide the applicant with additional detail of the property, a potential tenancy commencement date and details of how to view the property.

The Housing Association may undertake an affordability assessment before making a formal offer of a tenancy.

If an applicant does not reply to an invitation in writing, by letter or email or text, to view a property within 2 working days the offer will be deemed to have been refused and the property will be offered to the next applicant on the shortlist who qualifies for that offer. This will then count as one of the applicant's 2 reasonable offers unless a satisfactory explanation for the applicant's failure to respond is accepted by the SMP.

Where the offer is to an applicant owed a statutory homeless duty a property will not be reoffered until the SMP Council who owe the applicant that duty, have been informed of the applicant's refusal, or failure to attend the appointment to view, and have made a decision whether or not to enforce the offer to end the homeless duty owed.

A suitable and reasonable offer of accommodation is defined in appendix 4 of the policy.

Planning requirements may restrict which applicants can be considered for a particular property. Any 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.

There may, unfortunately, be exceptional circumstances where, following a viewing or notification of offer an offer may still be withdrawn. This can be done up to the point before a tenancy is signed. Examples of reasons when a property offer may be withdrawn are:

- The property is not suitable for the households needs
- The property fails to become available
- There is an issue and concern for community safety
- It comes to light that information has been withheld
- It comes to light that that the household or member of the household has a property related debt
- The offer has been made in error
- The household's circumstances changed
- The property is required for an emergency
- It transpires that the rent would not be affordable

There must be clear grounds recorded by the partner Housing Association for refusing or bypassing applicants who are top of any shortlist. Where an applicant has been refused or bypassed because they have failed a verification check or that their circumstances have changed, the applicant should be informed by the Housing Association of the reason and in the case of a homeless applicant the Local Authority Housing Team should also be informed.

For all other reasons for example, issues of public safety, risk, or sustainability of the tenancy, an applicant, upon request, will be informed of the reason behind the decision to refuse or bypass them.

Shortlisting Criteria

Local connection and then the Band allocated followed by date order in that Band will normally be used to decide when to make an offer of accommodation and to whom, unless the SMP apply the policy of making an offer outside of band and date order as set out in section 1 of this policy.

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 in descending order:

1: A local connection to one of the 3 partner Councils

Where an applicant has a local connection with more than one Council in the SMP area (based on the local connection rules set under this policy) they will be required to select a Council where they would prefer to be housed.

Applicants will be shortlisted first by their assessed local connection to one of the 3 Councils.

2: Bedroom Need

The 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.

An applicant whose minimum need is higher than the number of bedrooms in a property will not normally be able to bid on the property as they would be over-occupying accommodation.

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.

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.

3: Banding

Shortlisting will then be based on the higher the band for the applicants who have bid for a particular property.

4: Effective date in Band

Within each band and after taking into account local connection, an applicant will be short listed in order of the earliest effective banding date.

Note: Although under-occupying applicants will be shortlisted there is no obligation on a partner to offer a property to an applicant who will under-occupy if this is not effective use of their 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.

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.

Unless a property is advertised with restrictions, applicants who are members of the scheme can bid for any property in SMP area regardless of where they live. However, when drawing up the shortlist applicants will be ranked first by local connection to the Council area where the property is advertised (using the local connection criteria set out in Qualification rule 2, Section 2 of the Policy) then by band and date order. There are 3 examples set out below to help explain this rule.

The exception to this rule will be where a bid is made by a victim of domestic abuse or severe harassment or other severe threats, where it has been assessed and agreed that they cannot remain in the local authority area where they are at risk.

Example 1 - Applicant X has a local connection to Chorley and this is the area where the advertised vacant property is located. Applicant X is in Band B. An applicant living in Preston (applicant Y) bids for the property and is in Band A but has no local connection to Chorley. Applicant X and any other applicants with a local connection to Chorley from bands B-C will be shortlisted above applicant Y as they have a local connection with the area where the property is located.

Example 2 - Applicant T has a local connection to Preston and this is the area where the advertised vacant property is located. Applicant T is in Band C. An applicant living in South Ribble (applicant U) bids for the property and is in Band A but has no local connection to Preston. Applicant T will be shortlisted above applicant U as they have a local connection with the area where the property is located.

Example 3 – Applicant C is from South Ribble and has been assessed as being at extreme risk in South Ribble due to fleeing domestic abuse but would not be at risk in Preston. If it is assessed that Applicant C would be safe in Preston, she will be granted a 'local connection' exception to Preston and would be able to bid for properties in Preston and would be shortlisted based on her band and date in band.

In the circumstances where two households have bid with the same local connection, the same band and the same registration date a decision for who the property will be offered to will be based on the household who is assessed as being most suitable for that property.

Where the property advert has indicated specific requirements such as age or accessibility, only applicants meeting those requirements will be eligible for an offer.

Assessing overcrowding and the bedroom size that will be allocated to applicants

For the purpose of assessing overcrowding and the bedroom size to be allocated to a household for rehousing purposes the following criteria will be used:

A separate bedroom is required for the following:

- Every adult couple married or cohabiting
- Any other adult aged 18 or over
- Any 2 children of the same sex aged 10 -16
- Any 2 children regardless of sex aged under 10
- Any other child

Local Lettings Policies

Select Move partners may draw up local lettings policies that are time limited and have been consulted on within the Select Move partnership and agreed with the Steering Group.

Local lettings policies may be applied to meet the particular needs of a local ward or area or to address sustainability and community issues to ensure that the housing allocation scheme is able to contribute to building sustainable communities. Appendix 2 gives full details for how local lettings policies will be assessed and applied.

Applicants may as part of a local lettings plan be required to attend training to demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy. This training is not currently available at the time of adopting this policy but may be available in the future. 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.

Section 5 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definition of Terms

Accessibility – Used here the term refers to how ‘user friendly’ the service is to all people who may want to use it.

Adapted Property – Property that is suitable for those with a physical disability i.e., where a stair lift has been fitted.

Automatic Bidding – Within the ICT system a means of expressing an interest in a property for someone, without making the bid themselves.

Banding Scheme – The method by which customers are prioritised for social housing (previously ‘points schemes’).

Bidding – The term used to describe people who register an interest in a property (no money is involved in making the bid).

Choice Based Lettings (CBL) – The system of letting property that gives customers choice in where they live through advertising property.

Housing Register – A list of people applying for social housing (commonly referred to as a ‘housing waiting list’).

Applicants – Those people applying to the scheme for housing.

Effective Date – The date used to decide between customers in the same Band to establish who has waited longest.

Hard to Let – Low demand property where it takes longer to find a tenant.

Letting Policy – The means by which it is decided how a property will be offered to applicants.

Local Lettings – Short term policy made in local areas (to tackle specific, identified housing management issues) on how property will be offered that differs in some part from the overall scheme policy.

Appendix 2: How any local lettings policy will be applied and reviewed

Local lettings initiatives may be applied to meet the particular needs of a local ward or area or to address sustainability and community issues to ensure that the housing allocation scheme is able to contribute to building sustainable communities.

They will be tailored to fit local situations in well-defined communities (such as a particular block of flats, an individual street, or new housing development, or may be applied to a parish or a village in a rural area). Each local lettings policy will be based on a detailed analysis of relevant information gathered from a variety of sources and may include, for example, evidence from internal departments, partner Housing Associations, local Councillors, and the community itself. (Evidence may include information such as tenant profiling, the incidence of anti-social behaviour, and stock turnover in a particular block, street or area, a neighbourhood plan or the need to provide housing for local people in rural villages and parishes).

The following are examples of local lettings policies that may be deployed under this policy. The list is for illustrative purposes and is not exhaustive.

- 1) Age restrictions.
- 2) Prioritising applicants who are key workers, as defined by SMP.
- 3) Restrictions on lettings to vulnerable households where there are already a concentration of supported tenants/residents in a street or block.
- 4) Lettings to childless households where there are high concentrations of children and young people living on a specific estate, street or block.
- 5) Disregarding household type or property matching rules to allow, for example, under-occupation to reduce child density or to account for future family growth.
- 6) Ensuring that there is a balance of working and non-working households allocated to a scheme.

New developments will normally have local lettings policies (usually only applies to first lettings) regardless of whether the new development is subject to a Section 106 agreement or affordable housing statement. Where a new development is subject to a Section 106 planning agreement the criteria set will be followed.

In order to ensure a reasonable mix of household sizes and types, and families with children of different ages, a local lettings policy will normally be used for new developments larger than four properties. This may set restrictions on the number of lettings, which can be made to families with young children, for example, or the number of families who are not working.

How will a local lettings policy be assessed and agreed?

The SMP will decide when a local lettings policy may be appropriate and why.

There must be a clear evidence base for adopting a local lettings policy. The following framework will be used by the SMP to decide whether a local lettings policy is appropriate:

- 1) That there is a clear definition of the objective to be achieved by that particular local lettings policy.
- 2) That there is a clear evidence base to back up the need for a local lettings policy.
- 3) That any potential equality impact has been considered.
- 4) How long the local lettings policy is intended to operate.
- 5) When the local lettings policy should be reviewed.

A written record of each policy adopted or rejected should be kept.

It is the intention that local lettings policies will be fluid with new policies being added as are required and existing policies being deleted once the objective for that policy has been met.

Any property advert will state whether there are any local lettings restrictions or criteria.

Appendix 3: Definition of a reasonable offer

A refusal of an offer of the correct size and type will normally be considered unreasonable.

Guidance on reasonable and unreasonable refusals:

1) Property size

The property must be the appropriate size for the household's needs at the time of making the offer. Where the family composition has changed, so that the property offered is too small or large for the applicant's needs, the refusal will be recorded as reasonable.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they register any change in their circumstances that will affect the number of bedrooms to which they are entitled.

Where the applicant refuses a property because it is too small on grounds of the need for an additional or larger bedroom(s) due to medical/mobility factors, but it meets the lettings standard, this will normally be considered to be an unreasonable refusal unless the applicant provides new medical information at the offer stage that is accepted by the SMP.

2) Property type

It will not be considered to be a reasonable refusal due to a dislike of the property type. Therefore, an applicant cannot reasonably refuse an offer because for example, it is in a tower block, it does not have a garden or a particular heating system, it is on a wrong floor, or does not have a lift. If the applicant states medical grounds for refusing the property, these should already have been disclosed and considered as part of the assessment of their application, unless new information is submitted that is accepted by the SMP.

Where specialist accommodation is offered to a household inappropriately, this is considered to be a reasonable refusal. This may be for example:

- a) Offers of wheelchair standard housing to households which do not have wheelchair users
- b) Offers made to disabled applicants which are unsuitable for their needs, for example where they are unable to open a door entry system because the doors are too heavy
- c) Offers of sheltered housing where the applicant is not of the appropriate age.

3) Property condition

Where a property is refused on grounds of repair/decoration, this will be considered an unreasonable refusal unless the voids team decides to withdraw the property from letting for further works to be carried out.

4) Area of choice

An offer will still be considered reasonable even if it is not within an applicant's area of choice. This is regardless of whether an applicant has bid for a property outside their area of choice or has been allocated a property directly. It should also be noted that where an applicant is made a direct offer such as: where the applicant has been assessed as being statutory homeless and are owed a statutory homeless duty, area of choice will not apply.

5) Racial harassment

Where an applicant from a black or ethnic minority household refuses the property prior to viewing because the previous tenant was rehoused as a result of racial harassment, or there is a known problem of racial harassment in the vicinity of the property, the refusal is considered reasonable.

6) Choice of landlord

An applicant cannot choose whether they are rehoused by a specific Housing Association. Therefore, any refusal for example by an applicant of a property because it is a Housing Association property with no 'Right to Buy', or 'Right to Acquire', or the rent is higher than another social landlord will not be considered to be reasonable (unless in the example of the rent level the assessment is that the offer is unaffordable for the applicant in question).

7) Pets

One of the conditions of the tenancy agreement is that a tenant must obtain the written consent of the landlord before keeping domestic pets.

Any intention to keep a pet must comply with the Housing Association's tenancy terms and conditions, which means that permission must be sought and agreed prior to signing the tenancy agreement for the property. Therefore, any refusal on the basis that permission has not been granted to keep a pet is not reasonable.

Appendix 4: Assessing whether an applicant qualifies for a priority Band A or B on the basis of medical priority

The assessment: Awarding Medical Priority for significant Medical Conditions that are being made worse by an applicant's housing circumstances

The Policy

Medical priority can be awarded under 2 of the adopted bands. These are:

Band A: Emergency Medical - Applicants who are suffering sudden or severe progressive life-threatening medical conditions and need an immediate move (e.g., to facilitate hospital discharge) because their current home is unsuitable (as it does not meet their medical needs and/or cannot be adapted) and poses an immediate and serious danger to the individual.

Band B: Severe Medical Need - Applicants who are suffering severe, long term, medical conditions (chronic or progressive) or severe disability that need to move urgently because their home is deemed unsuitable and is directly detrimental to the applicants' health condition

The framework that will be applied to assess medical impact cases**The detail for the operational guidance that used to assess medical cases**

The following operational guidance framework has been developed to help officers to make their decisions on whether medical priority should be awarded.

- 1) The applicant will be asked to indicate on their on-line application form whether they or anyone in their household has an illness or disability that is affected by their current accommodation.
- 2) Applicants will be asked for information and any supporting documentary evidence, regarding how their health or welfare are affected by their current home, or why the applicant's health cannot be managed in their current accommodation.
- 3) If the applicant indicates in their on-line that they have a medical problem but do not clearly address the relevant question of impact of their current housing on their condition, the assessing officer should contact the applicant to ask them specifically to describe how the current housing is impacting on the condition described (a standard letter/form will be used).
- 4) The on-line application form and any follow up email will explain that where supporting information from a health professional is available, the applicant should provide this information to support their application, but that we do not, as a matter of course, require an applicant to submit a medical report, or obtain letters from their GP before an assessment will be progressed. We do not wish to create further work or costs for doctors or applicants by insisting that medical reports are produced before an application can be considered.
- 5) On receipt, of all of the information the assessing officer will consider whether any supplementary information is needed from any other relevant professional, who may be able to explain the impact the applicant's current accommodation is having on their medical condition or disability.

- 6) The assessing officer should take into consideration any recommendations from the applicants GP, hospital consultant, or Occupational Therapy, Social Worker as applicable. The applicant should be informed that the processing partner is not responsible for chasing up requests made by the applicant to health professionals for further information.
- 7) While this information is being provided, and pending the assessment of medical priority, eligible and qualifying applicants who have another statutory housing need should be registered (if they meet the qualifying rules) and placed in a band according to that need. Where no other housing need exists, the application will remain as pending until any medical priority is determined.
- 8) The assessing officer supported, where necessary, by a senior officer, will normally make a decision whether or not to award a priority based upon the information provided. They will use these guidance notes and assessment framework contained here to help them make a decision.
- 9) If the assessing officer is of the view that it would be beneficial to obtain an opinion from an independent Medical Advisor, or will advise the applicant to make a referral to an Occupational Therapist for an assessment. They should be asked to provide advice on the possible impact of any medical or disability condition to help address the impact of the applicant's current accommodation on that condition. A Medical Advisor will not normally be asked to carry out a medical examination and their opinion will be based on the information provided by the applicant and any supporting information from a medical professional and any information submitted by any organization supporting the applicant.
- 10) Some applicants may have a serious and debilitating health condition which requires specialist housing adaptations; however, a 'medical priority' award can only be given if their current home is unable to meet their needs. The assessing officer should consider whether the applicant already has the necessary adaptations in their current home before a 'medical priority' band is awarded to help them move. Also, consideration will be given as to whether the applicant could remain in their current home with further adaptations being put into place. A referral to the Occupational Health Service may be requested to determine the full options available before a 'medical priority' can be awarded.
- 11) In the circumstances where the assessing officer believes there may be an urgent and immediate need, due to the severity of the impact of their current housing on an applicant's disability, the case can (with a senior officer's approval) be submitted to the Occupational Therapy Team (OTT) for a more detailed assessment. In order to do this the OTT may visit the home of the applicant and consider any supporting information and may recommend whether Band A or B priority should be awarded, based upon the severity of the case and the urgency of the need for re-housing.
- 12) The OT may also make recommendations re the type of housing that the applicant may need.
- 13) Where priority is awarded applicants will only be considered for the type of accommodation assessed as being required. For example, if it is assessed that an applicant needs to move to a bungalow because due to their condition, they need to use a wheelchair, they will only be considered for suitable properties that meet this need.
- 14) If an existing social housing tenant applies to the scheme due to their current property being medically unsuitable for their needs, that landlord will

assess whether a medical banding should be awarded using this framework set out in the policy. This is to ensure that the property could not be adapted to meet the needs of the applicant rather than seek a move to alternative social housing.

- 15) The assessment officer in considering evidence to support a medical impact banding should consider evidence submitted by a relevant medical professional. A relevant medical professional is defined as:
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Specialist medical advisor
 - Community / mental health nurse
 - Hospital / discharge liaison
 - Social Worker
 - GP
 - Health visitor
- 16) Applicants are not required to obtain any supporting medical evidence in support of their application before an assessment is made although where this is already available, they should be asked to provide it in support of their case.
- 17) Whilst GP's provide the most likely source of medical opinion for most housing applicants, it is not uncommon for GP surgeries to refuse a request from a patient or a processing partner for supporting medical information. This is due to GP surgeries facing increasing demand on their services and GP's time for 'non-clinical' matters. If an applicant is unable to gain supporting information from their GP, advise the applicant to try other agencies or professionals who may be involved with their case. In the absence of any medical professional being able to verify and support an applicant's health needs, the assessing officer should consider all other supporting information available including the applicants own self-assessment of their needs. The Council will not pay for the release of medical information from a GP.
- 18) Where the assessing officer believes that further medical information is required before they can complete the assessment the assessing officer should ask the applicant to obtain relevant information from their GP or medical professional dealing with them.
- 19) The assessing officer should not as a matter of routine ask the applicant to obtain further medical information. In the majority of cases, it can be expected that from the information provided by the applicant in answering the questions set that the assessing officer should be able to decide on whether the medical problem has such an impact to meet the criteria set out for an award of a Band A or B using the examples set out in this procedure for each of those Bands.
- 20) Further medical reports or information on the impact may be required where the officer is considering a Band A award and less likely when an officer is considering a Band B award.
- 21) There will be occasions when advice, or clarification, from a GP or hospital consultant may need to be sought by the applicant. For example, where it is claimed that an applicant's housing circumstances is severely affecting their mental health.
- 22) It is important to note that the assessing officer is not making a medical opinion. The role of the officer is to consider evidence re the impact of an applicant's current housing circumstances on any medical condition or disability.

- 23) Applicants who require support to live independently with their medical condition will be placed in a priority band for their medical need but may be suspended from bidding until an appropriate package of support has been agreed. If no appropriate support package has been agreed the applicant will not be offered accommodation whilst a support plan/package is pursued.
- 24) Each individual on the application with a health or welfare problem will be assessed. If there is more than 1 member of the household whose health and/or welfare is being affected by their housing, their application will be awarded the need relating to the severest problem.
- 25) Where an applicant has been placed in bands A or B as a result of a medical need this may be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the award is still relevant and will be reviewed at the point an applicant receives an offer.
- 26) The review will determine whether the level of priority is still appropriate. The review may involve a phone-call to the applicant and/ or support agency, an email, or a home visit.
- 27) Where an applicant already registered notifies a change of medical circumstances that are impacted by their current housing the applicant's priority will be re-assessed using the same process.
- 28) Applicants should be informed in writing by email/letter of the outcome of their health and wellbeing assessment, and brief reasons explaining why the decision was made. If they disagree with the assessment there is a right to review but they should be informed that they must state the reasons for review in writing and provide any additional health and wellbeing evidence so the case can be reconsidered. (There are template letters for this purpose).
- 29) In addition to medical banding the assessing officer may also decide (but is not required to decide) to give a property recommendation or location recommendation upon which the banding award is conditional. The property recommendation or location would normally be due to clear evidence from an appropriate health professional or OT which is accepted by the officer.

Making the decision on what banding if any should be awarded

When medical priority will not normally be awarded

Medical priority will not normally be awarded in the following circumstances:

- a) Where the applicant has a health issue, however severe, that is not impacted by the accommodation occupied
- b) Health problems that are not affected by housing or cannot be improved by moving
- c) Where a move would only make a marginal improvement to the applicant's condition
- d) Medical impacts caused by housing defects that are likely to be rectified in a reasonable time frame.
- e) Where another reasonable course of action is available to the applicant to resolve their difficulties.
- f) Time-related medical problems (e.g., pregnancy-related problems or a broken leg)

- g) Disrepair problems not impacting significantly on the applicant's medical condition. (Note under the policy an applicant may receive priority separately for living in unfit or unsatisfactory housing depending on the assessment made of their circumstances and impact).
- h) Overcrowding not impacting significantly on the applicant's medical condition. (Note under the policy an applicant may receive priority separately for being overcrowded).
- i) If the situation can be resolved by equipment or minor adaptations which can be implemented in a reasonable period of time.

The assessing officer should follow the 5 - stage process below

When assessing whether to award band A or B or no priority, the assessing officer will follow the 5-stage process set out below:

1. Is the medical/disability issue serious enough for a priority banding to be considered?
2. If the medical condition is serious enough for a priority banding to be considered the assessing officer should then decide if there is a direct link between the identified medical problem and the applicant's current housing accommodation/situation, i.e. on the facts obtained (from the applicant and any medical information or reports submitted including any advice from an independent medical advisor or OTT) is the officer accept that the applicant's current housing accommodation/circumstances is making their medical condition substantially worse, or will make it worse.
3. In practical terms the officer should consider the adverse effect this has on the applicant's ability to manage day-to-day tasks in their current home. The applicant's current housing accommodation/circumstances may be impacting on their medical condition or disability but not to the extent that an award of band A or B priority should be granted under the criteria adopted for the policy. The examples listed for an award of band A or B are used to guide the officer when making their decision.
4. Before making an award the assessing officer needs to be satisfied that there is a realistic expectation that the impact on the identified medical condition/disability would be removed or significantly improved through the provision of alternative accommodation.
5. If the officer is satisfied that the impact on the identified medical condition/disability would be removed or significantly improved they would then decide whether to award band A or B depending on the severity of the impact and using the examples below to guide them.

Examples of circumstances to help the assessing officer to decide when Band A (Emergency) should be awarded on medical or disability grounds

The following Band A examples are intended to guide the assessing officer on the threshold set for a Band A award. They can also serve to help an applicant understand the threshold for a priority award to be granted. A band A award is for *"Applicants who are **suffering sudden or severe progressive life-threatening** medical conditions and **need an immediate move** (e.g., to facilitate hospital discharge) because their current home is unsuitable (as it does not meet their medical needs and/or cannot be adapted) and **poses an immediate and serious danger** to the individual."*

1. Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and cannot be discharged from hospital because they do not have any accommodation, or their accommodation is unsuitable for example, because they cannot access toilet and/or bathing facilities in the property. This will include cases that cannot be discharged from hospital because their home is, and will remain, permanently entirely unsuitable or entirely inaccessible to live in.
2. Where the assessing officer accepts that the evidence from a relevant health professional indicates that there is a significant risk of serious and permanent injury and/or permanent disability.
3. Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and urgently need to move to accommodation with significant disabled adaptations, such as accommodation suitable for a wheelchair user.
4. A serious illness, where an applicant is receiving palliative care and urgently requires rehousing to facilitate the on-going provision of that care
5. The applicant's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening, e.g., applicant has severe mental health problems that are significantly exacerbated by their accommodation and that opinion is fully evidenced by the applicant's consultant or mental health services
6. Due to limited mobility a person is unable to access essential parts of the property e.g., bathroom/toilet and no adaptation is possible
7. A member of the household is elderly or 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 the person to remain at home.
8. Where the applicant is prevented from having access to kidney dialysis, respiratory, or other similar essential equipment. This will normally apply where these circumstances are likely to prevent someone from remaining in their home for all or most of the time. Such a condition would be likely to be ongoing, rather than a temporary condition

Examples of circumstances to help the assessing officer to decide when Band B should be awarded on medical or disability grounds

1. A life-threatening condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would make that condition significantly easier to manage
2. A life limiting condition and their current accommodation is affecting their ability to retain independence or enable adequate care
3. A new and life-changing condition that severely impairs their mobility, meaning they are unable to carry out day-to-day activities, or have difficulty accessing facilities inside and outside of their accommodation and require housing into suitable accommodation
4. An applicant or member of his/her household usually has a chronic condition examples might include a respiratory condition, severe asthma or emphysema – and that the condition is being made worse by the current accommodation.
5. Where their current property leaves a person at risk of infection, e.g., where an applicant is suffering from late-stage or advanced AIDs

6. People who have a severe mental health or learning disability which significantly affects their ability to lead a normal life and which puts them at risk of admission to hospital or residential care. Evidence would normally need to be provided from a specialist consultant psychiatrist or a certified pediatric nurse that their current accommodation is having a significant detrimental impact on the mental health of any member of the household
7. People living in a mobile home, caravan or converted vehicle which, due to medical conditions, the vehicle cannot meet their essential needs
8. Where remaining in the current accommodation poses a significant risk of serious and permanent injury and/or permanent severe disability
9. Someone with a medical or disability who's housing has rendered them housebound
10. Where a move would avoid the need for another service (e.g., Social Services) from having to provide a significant level of support. This might include for example residential care, overnight care provision, or other support with similar resource implications
11. Where someone suffers with epilepsy or other conditions that cause frequent and unpredictable falls and all medical interventions to prevent them have been investigated. This will involve an assessment of the layout of their current accommodation, for example the number and nature of steps, stairs or other hazards that may increase the risk of serious injury
12. The applicant or household member requires significant disabled adaptations to meet their needs and this is not possible in their current accommodation or would not be cost effective.
13. Armed forces personnel who need to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability that he or she has sustained as a result of service.
14. Veterans who have actively served in the armed forces and are suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder or serious illness directly related to service in the forces
15. An occupational therapist has identified that the current accommodation is partially suitable but:
 - The applicant or member of his/her household needs a major adaptation, such as a level access shower; or
 - The applicant or member of his/her household has significant difficulty managing stairs or difficulty accessing the property owing to stairs or slopes leading to doorways and the occupational therapist recommends a lift, ramped access or ground floor living; and
 - The adaptations are unlikely to be completed in a reasonable period of time
16. Applicants who have significant mobility issues and would benefit from a move to ground floor or level access accommodation
17. Applicants who have significant mobility issues and would benefit from a move to accommodation that has level access showering facilities
18. Children with severe conditions such as autism, or cerebral palsy or ADHD where their long-term needs cannot be met without long term settled accommodation.
19. A person with a severe disability requiring some adaptations to their property that cannot be provided for in their current accommodation.
20. Where an applicant can access their home but struggles to access normal day-to-day facilities within it (e.g., bath/shower/toilet) without experiencing significant difficulty, pain or other discomfort. This would include cases

where an adaptation is possible but cannot be undertaken in a reasonable period of time. (Note: any priority would be removed if an adaptation is completed, or work started)

Reference points to help the assessing officer consider the medical condition and how it should be managed

Use the BNF – National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) website to help you obtain advice on any medical condition, treatment and drugs taken by the applicant

a) Treatment summaries for every condition – very useful in that it covers how the condition needs to be managed and what is considered a serious level of medication

<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/treatment-summary/>

b) Drugs – description of every drug and information relevant to dosage and side effects

<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/>

Appendix 5 - Right to Move Qualifying Criteria

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 Landlords 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 6: How the SMP will apply the unacceptable behaviour qualification test.

The assessing officer will be guided using the following framework:

1. The behaviour need not have led to possession, prosecution or other enforcement action by a statutory agency, provided that, on the balance of probability, the household is responsible
2. In normal circumstances the behaviour concerned should have occurred within the last two years. In cases of a more serious nature, for example, those involving criminal prosecution, a longer timescale may be appropriate.
3. There must be reasonable grounds for believing that the behaviour could continue or be repeated. For example, the applicant may have issued threats, or there might be a history of repeat offending.

The assessing officer will specifically consider:

- a) The seriousness of the applicant's behaviour
- b) The duration of the behaviour and/or the number and frequency of incidents
- c) The length of time that has elapsed since the behaviour took place
- d) Any relevant vulnerability or support needs that may explain the behaviour
- e) Whether there is meaningful engagement with support agencies
- f) Critically, whether there has been a significant and sustained change in the applicant's behavior
- g) Whether they believe on the evidence that the behavior is likely to still reoccur now or at the point a tenancy was offered or commenced
- h) Whether the circumstances that caused the behaviour have changed. For example, whether nuisance was caused by drug or alcohol problems that the applicant has since successfully resolved
- i) Whether the member of the household responsible for the behaviour is still a member of the household
- j) Whether the SMP can accept any assurances from the applicant as to future behaviour.
- k) If the unacceptable behaviour is believed to be due to physical, mental or learning difficulties, whether, with appropriate support, the applicant could maintain a tenancy
- l) The applicant's current circumstances. For example, health needs, dependents and any other relevant factors.

Applicants to whom the rule is applied will be written to and informed that:

- a) That the unacceptable behavior rule has been applied to their case and either they do not qualify, or that they qualify but cannot bid until the behavior has been resolved
- b) What they must do to resolve the problem
- c) That for either decision i.e., disqualification or qualification but not allowed to bid, it is the applicant's responsibility to notify the SMP when they have, in their view, resolved the issue and that they will need to present evidence to back up their view.

- d) Where an applicant is disqualified for unacceptable behaviour they will have a right to ask for a review of the decision made to disqualify them.

Note, where an applicant is disqualified, any new application will normally only be reconsidered at the request of the applicant and only where there has been no reasonable cause for complaint or concern against the applicant (or members of their prospective household) for a continuous period of 12 months.

Appendix 7: How the SMP will apply the disqualification rule where it is suspected that false information has been provided, or important information has been withheld.

Section 171(1) of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence for anyone, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (and therefore in seeking an allocation of accommodation) to:

- a) Knowingly or recklessly make a materially false statement or
- b) Knowingly withhold information that the SMP reasonably required him/her to give in connection with the exercise of those functions.
- c) A person guilty of this offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine at the date of this scheme document of up to £5,000.

The circumstances in which an offence is committed could include:

- d) Any false information given on an application form for housing/accommodation (including transfer applications).
- e) Any false information given in response to subsequent correspondence.

In addition, making a fraudulent application for housing may constitute an offence under the Theft Act 1968 and/or the Fraud Act 2006.

In many cases, applicants will have provided incorrect or inadequate information on their application form, but the assessment concludes that there was no deliberate intention.

It will be for the assessing officer in the first instance to decide if any errors contained in an application were deliberately made or not. If the officer is satisfied that the errors were not deliberate, or that it had no impact on the application, then no action will be taken though the applicant may be warned about the need to provide accurate information and the consequences for not doing so.

However, if the assessing officer has concerns, these will be discussed with their Manager who will decide if they:

- 1) Are satisfied that there is insufficient evidence to disqualify the application on these grounds.
- 2) Want more information to be gathered before a decision can be made.
- 3) Feel that there is insufficient evidence at the moment but want a more detailed investigation.
- 4) Are satisfied that the applicant has provided fraudulent information or withheld important information.

In serious cases the SMP will notify the Police.

If the decision is that applicant has given false information or withheld information they will not qualify for the register, or where information emerges after they have been placed on the register, they will be disqualified. In these circumstances a letter will be sent to the applicant to notify them of the decision and they will have a right to seek a review of that decision.



CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE SELECT MOVE HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

The partners of Select Move are reviewing the Housing Allocation Policy and we are asking for your views on the proposed changes.

Select Move is a sub-regional partnership between the 3 Local Council Districts and 11 Registered Provider Housing Associations that own social housing stock across:

1. Chorley Borough Council
2. Preston City Council
3. South Ribble Borough Council

Why are we proposing to make changes?

By law every Local Authority has to adopt a Housing Allocations Policy, which must be published and kept under review. The Select Move policy requires a review to make the Policy fairer and clearer, and to ensure it still reflects the partnership’s priorities.

The consultation period will run until *enter date*

We will use your feedback to prepare a report latter this year for presentation to the Cabinet or Executive committees for the 3 Councils and the partner Housing Association Boards of Management. It will be these bodies that will make a final decision on the changes proposed. We will then advertise the changes.

If you would like more information about our proposals, please get in touch with us using any of the methods below:

- 1) Telephone Select Move on: insert telephone number
- 2) Email insert email address or
- 3) Write to Select Move Housing Allocation Policy Consultation at insert address

The full version of the proposed Housing Allocation Policy can be viewed at *insert link for the full version of the proposed new policy.*

If you have had time to read the full policy and have any comments on it please record these in the box below.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to take part in this consultation. Your views are important to us and help improve the services we provide to our customers.

Proposed Change 1: Strengthening the local connection rules to qualify to join the Housing Register

It is proposed to tighten the rules which require an applicant to have a local connection to a Select Move Council area in order to qualify to be included on the Housing Register. Under the new rules proposed to be able to join the Register an applicant, or a member of their household, will have to:

- a) Have lived in a Select move Council area for the last 2 years instead of 6 months under the current policy, or
- b) Have close family (normally considered to be a mother, father, brother, sister, or adult son or daughter) that have lived in an area for a minimum of the last 5 years and, under the new policy, if they do not have a local connection for residence or employment they will now need to demonstrate a need to move to a Select Move partner's area to give or receive essential support from close family, or
- c) Be employed in permanent employment in a Select Move Council's area and that to travel to work by public transport would take them in excess of one hour each way.

In addition the reference to voluntary work in the specific Local Authority area for at least 10 hours per month over the last 12 months providing an exception to the need to have a local connection would be removed.

Current Policy

Under the current policy an applicant is eligible under the local connection rules to join the Housing Register if they meet one of the following rules. The rules are that they have:

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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)
- d) 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.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

Increasing the threshold for local connection for an applicant to be able to join the Housing Register will prioritise established local families who have a strong connection for residence, family, or employment over applicants who cannot demonstrate such a strong connection. There would be safeguards for applicants who apply to join the Register who have fled domestic abuse or extreme threats of violence from another area.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you disagree, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?

Proposed Change 2: Reducing the number of offers an applicant can refuse before a penalty is imposed from 3 to 2 reasonable offers

It is proposed that any applicant who refuses 2 reasonable offers within a 12-month period will either be:

- a) Disqualified from the housing register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 12 months, or
- b) Moved down to Band D for 12 months

This proposed change is to stop applicants bidding for properties they are not committed to taking which has the consequence that properties take longer to let and mean a considerable loss of rent for the social housing landlord letting the property. A definition of a reasonable offer will be clearly set out in the new policy so that an applicant is clear whether if they refuse an offer it will count under the 2 reasonable offer

Current Policy

Under the current policy an applicant is able to refuse 3 reasonable offers within a 12 month period they are removed from the Housing Register and not allowed to re-apply for a 6 month period.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

All applicants will continue to qualify for 2 reasonable offers in a 12-month period. If an applicant refuses 2 reasonable offers in that 12 months there is they will be either be removed from the Register for a 12 month period or 'downgraded' to Band D for 12 months.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you agree which penalty do you think should be imposed for refusing 2 reasonable offers:

- a) Removal from the housing register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 12 months, or
- b) Removal from the housing register and not allowed to reapply for a period of 6 months , or
- c) To be moved down to Band D for 12 months, or
- d) To be moved down to Band D for 6 months

If you disagree with the proposed change, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?



Proposed Change 3: Reducing the number of Bands from 5 to 4

The proposed change is to reduce the number of Bands from 5 to 4

The change is to move to a simple 4-band system A-D with the time a person joined the register determining their place in the queue for the band they have been allocated.

Band A will be for the most urgent housing need cases that need to move immediately.

Band B will be for urgent housing need cases that need to move

Band C will be everyone else that the legislation states has a statutory housing need.

Band D will be for everyone else who does not have a housing need

The Select Move Partnership has received regular feedback from users and stakeholders that customers do not understand why there is a need for 5 Bands and inevitably this can be confusing and encourages 'higher band chasing'.

Current Policy

The Current policy has 5 bands A-E.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

The banding system will be less complicated and it will be far clearer as to the criteria to be awarded a band A-D.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you disagree, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?

Proposed Change 4: Setting aside a percentage of vacant properties for applicants who are in employment

The proposal is to advertise a percentage of vacant properties for applicants who work full time, or at least 16 hours a week part time. The percentage ‘set aside’ could be set at 10%, 15% or 20% depending on the outcome of the consultation exercise and the view of Council members and the partner Housing Associations.

For the percentage of properties set aside for applicants who work the shortlisting criteria would be:

1. Local Connection
2. Then the applicant’s Band
3. Then whether they are employed
4. Then date order in Band for all those who bid and are employed

The purpose of this change is for the Housing Allocation Policy to help build ‘balanced social housing communities’ consisting of both working and non-working households.

Current Policy

Under the current policy a percentage of advertised properties are not labelled for applicants who work.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants?

For households where an applicant or joint applicant were working they would have a percentage of properties reserved for working households only. For applicants who are not working they would still be able to receive an offer of social housing depending on their band priority as the vast majority of homes would not be restricted to working households only.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you agree with the change what percentage of homes do you think should be set aside for working households:

- 10% -
- 15% -
- 20%

If you disagree, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?



Proposed Change 5: To place the requirement to have a local connection to the council where a property is advertised to the top of the shortlisting criteria

Given the shortage of social housing in all 3 Council areas covered by the Select Move Partnership the proposed change is to place the requirement to have a local connection to the Council area where the advertised property is located to the top of the shortlisting criteria. There will be safeguards for applicants who have to move from one Select Move Council area to another due to the risk of domestic abuse or other extreme threats which mean they would not be safe remaining in their 'home' area where they have a local connection.

Current Policy

Under the current policy there is a complicated system of both local and global priority for properties advertised. This means that although the need to have a local connection to the Council area where a property is advertised is key component of the shortlisting criteria, for some applicants they will be successful in bidding for a property in another of the Select Move Council areas through the current 'Global Priority' banding system.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

2 examples are given to illustrate what the change would mean for applicants.

Example 1 - Applicant X has a local connection to Chorley and this is the area where the advertised vacant property is located. Applicant X is in Band B. An applicant living in Preston (applicant Y) bids for the property and is in Band A but has no local connection to Chorley. Applicant X and any other applicants with a local connection to Chorley from bands B-C will be shortlisted above applicant Y as they have a local connection to the area where the property is located.

Example 2 – The advertised property is in Preston. Applicant X has a local connection to South Ribble and no local connection to Preston where the property is located. Applicant X makes a bid and no one from Preston in Bands A-C bid for the advertised property. Applicant X would be the successful applicant in this case.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you disagree, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?

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Proposed Change 6: To add a new “Insecurity that risks homelessness” category to Band B

The intention is for this new category to include applicants who would be owed what is called the main homelessness duty, but a Council has been able to negotiate for the applicant to remain where they are with family whilst they bid for accommodation or look for alternative accommodation. This new Band B category should reduce the number of families that become homeless as being able to be awarded this category would encourage many to remain where they are (as long as their accommodation has been assessed as being safe) and wait for social housing.

Current Policy

This category is not included in the current policy resulting in some families becoming homeless as their insecure living at home arrangement is not recognised as a housing need under the banding scheme.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

Applicants living with family in very insecure arrangements will not necessarily have to become homeless to be given priority on the Housing Register.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed change?

Agree

Disagree

If you disagree, please explain your reasons why and, if possible, provide an alternative to the proposal in the space below?

Proposed Change 7: We intend to expand the criteria for when a customer will qualify for the statutory housing need bands A, B and C and have additionally set out clearer details for when a band will be awarded for each of the housing need criteria in each Band. This will mean assessments are always consistently applied.

A number of changes are proposed to the categories awarded a band A-C based on an applicant's housing need. The proposed new categories are detailed in the summary table below in appendix 1.

Current Policy

Most categories mirror those set out in the current policy but there are clearer definitions used for when an applicant will or will not qualify for a housing need category for each band.

What the proposed change would mean for applicants

It will be far clearer when a band will be awarded and what criteria Select Move will use to assess whether an applicant meets the criteria for an award.

Each housing need category more accurately reflects the threshold of need that should be required for an award of Band A, B, C or D

Respondents to the consultation are asked to look at the proposed banding table below and answer these 3 questions.

Q1 - Do you think the housing need circumstances we have listed for Band A are right? If no what would you change?

Yes

No

Q2 - Do you think the housing need circumstances we have listed for Band B are right? If no what would you change?

Yes

No

Q3 - Do you think the housing need circumstances we have listed for Band C are right? If no what would you change?

Yes

No

Appendix 1:

THE BANDING SYSTEM AND THE ADOPTED HOUSING NEED CRITERIA FOR EACH OF THE 3 ADOPTED BANDS

BAND A: EXCEPTIONALLY URGENT NEED TO MOVE

1: Exceptional or medical impact with an immediate need to move

Where an applicant (or a member of their household) is unable to continue to occupy their current accommodation due to exceptional medical need or disability.

2: Exceptionally urgent need to move due to violence, harassment, or protection issues

Not every circumstance that may present can be captured under this category therefore the list below set out examples for when an award may be considered. This category is intended to cover exceptional need to move for Domestic Abuse, MARAC, Racial, Homophobic or Transgender Harassment, witness or child protection, private rented or social housing management transfers. The circumstances, however, must be assessed as exceptional with an immediate/critical need to move:

- a) Applicants who the SMP agree need to move immediately due to domestic violence or threats of violence or abuse threats from an ex-partner or family member they do not live with, or extreme threats of violence, extreme harassment, or other extreme circumstances deemed to significantly affect a household’s welfare and wellbeing. Note applicants would be encouraged to present as homeless where the SMP is of the view that it isn’t safe for them to remain in their home. If an SMP Council accept a homelessness duty an applicant will be banded according to the homelessness banding criteria.

For any Housing Association tenant, the expectation is that, where it is safe to do so, a like for like management transfer would be granted or an emergency decant provided whilst a suitable transfer can be arranged.

- b) Exceptional circumstances due to significant problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling in the social or private rented sector and there is an extreme risk to the tenant or their family's safety if they remain in the dwelling or area.
- c) For applications in circumstances where there is a critical and serious threat to the well-being of a child and their accommodation is a major contributory factor to that risk. This will be in circumstances where the relevant manager in Children's Services or equivalent assesses the level of risk exposure in relation to the child or children remaining in the current property as being so critical that no other reasonable options in relation to accommodation are available to protect the child.

3: Band A: Unfit or unsatisfactory housing – exceptionally urgent cases

There are 3 circumstances where Band A may be awarded:

1) Band A for applicants without access at all to any of the following facilities:

No access to:

- a) A bath or shower
- b) A toilet
- c) Cooking facilities
- d) Running hot water supplies
- e) Electric/gas needed for essential activities

Applicants who have access to shared facilities re cooking; bathroom and toilet will not qualify under these criteria.

This banding award does not include applicants sleeping rough or with no fixed abode. They will be dealt with under the homelessness criteria in this banding policy.

Any decision to award Band A for this category will take into account the reasons why the applicant does not have access to these facilities and whether this is a temporary or long-term situation.

2) Band A for applicants where unsatisfactory housing is having an exceptional impact.

Applicants who currently occupy a private sector property which has at least one Category 1 Hazard notification from a partner Council's Environmental Health Service (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and where a Prohibition Order has been served or is intended to be served under the Housing Act 2004 and the effect of the Prohibition Order is likely to mean that the applicant(s) will lose the use of their home on a permanent basis. The relevant conditions at the property must be life threatening, or in the SMP view present an immediate threat of serious injury to the occupant(s)

This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a period considered to be reasonable by the SMP, and the household are not able to afford to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative private sector accommodation.

Note - this category will not include Housing Association tenancies because there is a legal requirement on social landlords to urgently remedy defects that pose a risk to their tenants

3) Band A due to demolition or Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) cases.

Where the applicant's property is subject to demolition or subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order for redevelopment

4: Band A: Severe Overcrowding - People currently living in severely overcrowded accommodation defined as needing three or more bedrooms as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy.

Where an applicant's household is severely overcrowded which is defined as requiring 3 or more additional bedrooms to reach the bedroom standard and where an SMP Council has either:

- a) In the case of a private sector has issued a prohibition order due to an assessed significant risk to the household's safety if they were to remain, or
- b) Intend to issue a prohibition order due to an assessed significant risk to the household's safety, or
- c) In the case of a Housing Association tenancy where a prohibition order is not likely to be issued this will be assessed by the Manager responsible for the Allocation policy who will decide whether Band A should be awarded because of the significant risk to the household's safety if they were to remain.

5: Armed Forces who meet the following criteria

Applicants with urgent housing need and have access to no other accommodation who:

- a) Are serving (and will soon leave) the regular forces and are suffering from serious injury, illness, mental ill health, or disability which is attributable to the person's service
- b) Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service or
- c) Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service

6: Applicants owed a main section 193(2) homelessness duty by a SMP partner Council, or are owed a section 189(B) relief duty and would be likely to be owed a main duty if that relief duty were to end unsuccessfully**7: To release a specially adapted property**

Where a partner tenant does not require a specially adapted property for disabled use, and there is demand for its use. This would not include cases where the property to be released contains minor adaptations. Note a Housing Association SMP partner may decide to facilitate a transfer through a managed move outside of the SMP policy.

8: Care Leavers

Care leavers aged 18 – 21 whose care placement is coming to an end and they are assessed as being able to manage a tenancy providing they have been looked after and

accommodated by Lancashire County Council either within the County Council's area or out of area, and the County Council has a duty of care accepted under the Children Act.

Applicants are awarded this category in accordance with protocols between the partner 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.

9: Move on from Supported Housing

Applicants living in a short-term commissioned Supported Housing project that come under an SMP approved list of 'move on partners' who are assessed as ready to move on and where there is no other suitable option for meeting their housing need other than social housing. Appendix X (*to be added by SMP*) sets out the current approved move on partners for each of the 3 SMP Council areas. This list may change over time.

BAND B – URGENT/HIGH NEED TO MOVE

1: Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy

2: Severe impact medical need

Where an applicant (or a member of their household) is living in accommodation with a severe, long term, medical conditions (chronic or progressive) or severe disability that means they urgently need to move because their home is assessed as being highly unsuitable and is directly detrimental to the applicants' physical or mental health.

3: Unsatisfactory housing conditions or fitness

Private sector tenants that the relevant Council has determined, following an inspection and report from a partner Council's Environmental Health Service, that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety fitness rating and the assessing officer is 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 considerable risk to the applicant's health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of 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, and the household are not able to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative private sector accommodation

4: Former Regular Armed Forces Applicants

Members of the Armed Forces persons who meet the following criteria:

- a) They are serving in the regular forces and will be discharged within 6 months and have served for 5 years or more, or
- b) They were serving in the regular forces and they apply to join the housing register within 1 year of discharge, and
- c) Had been previously living in the SMP district immediately before joining the armed forces or since leaving

And d and e below must also apply

- d) They did not leave the armed forces as a result of a dishonorable discharge, and
- e) They do not own or have a legal interest in any other property

5: Band B for a statutory homeless duty defined as:

- 1) Applicants owed a section 195 (2) prevention of homelessness duty and the applicant is, at the point of that duty being accepted, considered likely to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless if the prevention duty and any subsequent relief duty were to end unsuccessfully.

6: Insecurity that risks homelessness

A pregnant woman or applicant with a child or children who are sharing a home with family who are not part of their household and where:

- a) They have no ownership or tenancy rights, and the arrangement is short term and very insecure and only available whilst the applicant is actively seeking an offer of social housing or alternative accommodation with friends or in the private rented sector, and
- b) They were owed a prevention of homelessness duty as they were assessed as likely to become homeless within 56 days, and that duty has ended because they have been allowed to remain at home whilst they bid for social housing with their Band B priority and it is likely that they can remain for at least a year, and
- c) The family member with the interest in the home has agreed to allow the applicant to remain for at least a year.

7: To provide or receive essential care

Band B will be awarded in the following circumstances:

- a) 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.
- b) Approved foster carers and adopters who require larger accommodation on the recommendation of children's services.

BAND C – ALL OTHER APPLICANTS ASSESSED AS HAVING A STATUTORY REASONABLE PREFERENCE BASED ON THEIR ASSESSED HOUSING NEED

1: Band C for a statutory homeless duty defined as:

- 1) Applicants where the section 189(B) Relief duty has been brought to an end and an applicant has been assessed at that point as being intentionally homeless (and hasn't been disqualified under the unacceptable behaviour disqualification rule).
- 2) Applicants owed the 193 C (4) Main duty where the Prevention or Relief duty was ended by the Council due to their deliberate non-cooperation
- 3) Applicants owed a section 189B (2) Relief duty by one of the 3 SMP partner Councils and the applicant is, at the point of that 189B duty being accepted, considered unlikely to be in priority need, or likely to be intentionally homeless.
- 4) Applicants owed a section 195 (2) Prevention of homelessness duty and unlikely to be owed a main duty if the prevention or relief duty is unsuccessful.
- 5) Applicants where the section 189(B) Relief of homelessness duty has been brought to an end and the applicant is determined to be homeless but not in priority need and therefore not owed a Main homeless duty.

2: 'Right to move applicants'

Existing social tenants of accommodation in England who the SMP have assessed as qualifying under the Government's Right to Move regulations. Allocation to applicants who qualify for this award is limited to a maximum of 1% of all lettings.

3: Overcrowded and deficient by one bedroom

Where an applicant's household is overcrowded defined as requiring 1 additional bedroom to reach the bedroom standard

4: Under-occupying SMP tenants

- a) A tenant of a SMP partner housing association under occupying family housing by two or more bedrooms in accordance with the criteria in this policy for measuring over and under occupying.
- b) A tenant of a SMP partner housing association seeking a move to non-family housing that will free up a house to enable use by a family.

5: Applicants with dependent children living in accommodation that lacks level access

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. Applicants in this category who are housed into Social Housing will not be eligible to join the housing register for 12 months from the date their tenancy commences.

6: New category - Hardship / Welfare band – those who qualify for DHP to help with rent

Applicants who are currently in receipt of DHP to assist with payment of rent, this will be reviewed every three months, if DHP payment is stopped banding will be reduced.

BAND D - APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT MEET AN IDENTIFIED STATUTORY HOUSING NEED AS DEFINED IN BANDS A-C

This band will contain all other applicants who meet the rules to qualify for the Housing Register but do not have an assessed statutory housing need for being owed a statutory reasonable preference as defined in the criteria set out for an award of bands A-C.

Applicants in Band D will be able to bid for advertised properties, but it is not expected that many will be successful given the shortage of social housing and the number of applicant's bidding from a higher band.

The exception is for Band D applicant who qualify for sheltered or older person's housing who will be allowed to bid on sheltered properties and not general needs properties. There is likely to be a reasonable number of low demand sheltered or older person homes available to applicants in Band D.

The verification and assessment for Band D applicants is intended to be 'light touch' at the point of application but if an applicant is successful in bidding full checks and verification will be undertaken before an offer of accommodation is made.

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Customer and Digital) (Introduced by Executive Member (Customer, Streetscene and Environment))	Executive Cabinet	Thursday, 19 January 2023

Customer Access Policy

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. For Executive Cabinet to consider the Customer Access Charter and Feedback Policy.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To approve the Customer Access Charter including:
 - a) Customer access standards
 - b) Feedback policy
 - c) Improvements to general online contact and customer processes
 - d) Uniforms
 - e) Performance measures

Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure that we continue to deliver an excellent standard of customer care in line with the model agreed by both councils as part of the shared Customer Services.

Other options considered and rejected

4. To not approve the proposed Charter and associated recommendations. This option is not recommended as it would prevent the delivery of a clear customer services approach across the shared service and wider organisation.

Executive summary

5. This report provides an overview of the proposed Customer Access Charter, which presents the principles and standards for customer access across the organisation.
6. The report includes:
 - customer services principles
 - customer care standards
 - improvements to current customer access

- proposed uniforms
- proposed changes to processes to ensure that customers can access specialist services at the first point of contact
- a refreshed Feedback Policy.

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

8. The Customer Access Charter sets out how customers can get in contact with and access the council and the standards of customer care that can be expected across the organisation.
9. The Charter has been developed in relation to the new shared Customer Service model, which was agreed by members in 2021 as part of the shared services proposals, and sets out how the council will deliver an excellent customer service which meets the needs of our customers.
10. The Charter is supplemented by a Feedback Policy which sets out the councils’ approach to complaints, compliments and other forms of feedback, as a key mechanism within the councils’ approach to customer service. This has been refreshed to reflect audit review findings for the previous customer complaint processes.
11. The full Charter is available at appendix A, with the Feedback Policy at appendix B.

Principles

12. The Customer Access Charter has been developed in relation to the following vision and principles which were agreed as part of the shared Customer Services model and service review in 2021. This vision takes into account best practice from other local authorities and the private sector, the shift in customer expectations and practice as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the efficiencies of automated and digitised services which can be re-invested back into the service to offer an even better customer experience.

Vision and priorities

When customers access our services, they will be modern and easy to interact with. Internally, we will have clear processes that are digitised where possible and make effective use of technology to help improve consistency.

Successful implementation will increase operational efficiency, support digital take up, promote the green agenda through sustainable business processes and, most importantly, maximise customer satisfaction.

What does the future look like?

- A consistent experience across any channel or access point

For example, a customer could complete a process or report an issue from home or with a customer service advisor in the council office, helping to transfer and build confidence in digital skills – both would work in the same way.

- End to end visibility of processes

Once a report or issue has been submitted, both customers and customer advisors will be able to see where the query is up to in the process with clear communication at each point, helping to manage expectations.

- Digitised postal services

Incoming mail will transition to more convenient communication channels but where its received, coupled with statutory correspondence will be managed through a virtual mailroom service. This will increase efficiency, improve data protection, and ensure service are resilient.

- Best use of technology to improve decision making

Customer service officers will be supported by digital automation because recent software developments mean that much of the decision making that would previously have meant a break or delay in the process, is now integrated into a single workflow resulting in quicker response times.

- Effective use of information to help ensure customer services excellence

The service will have improved access to information and data to support decision making and plan services to meet demand and customer expectations. Customer Services will have a proactive approach and use the information that is available to help continually improve services.

- Customer resolutions at the first point of contact

Customer contacts will be resolved at the first point of contact wherever possible and customers will have direct access to specialists who will be able to handle resolutions quickly and effectively. Complicated processes and hand overs will be minimised to ensure a streamlined service which provides the best possible experience for the customer.

This means that the shared model aims to deliver services at the first point of contact wherever possible, with staff enabled to work across all channels in relation to customer needs. The majority of customer contracts will be resolved in tier 1, with only more specialist service requests being passed to tier 2 or 3:

Tier 1: When customers contact the councils through a range of channels, all staff will be able to support customers with accessing information and services through the council website.

- All contact channels with priority focus on assisted face to face contact
- Fully automated and delivered through digital services
- Resolved at the first point of contact

Tier 2: Passed directly to a specialist customer services advisor. Customers should be able to speak to a specialist and have their contact resolved quickly and effectively.

- All contact channels
- Fully automated and delivered through digital services
- Resolved at the first point of contact

Tier 3: Specialist contact relating to back-office functions outside of customer services will be passed on to duty officers in 'one-step.' Whilst this type of contact is less frequent, it is still important that a specialist is available to support customers and provide excellent customer services.

- All contact channels
- Fully automated and delivered through digital services

Customer Care Standards

13. It is proposed that customer care standards are aligned across the councils in order to ensure that officers across Chorley and South Ribble can work effectively across both councils following a shared customer services approach.
14. The Customer Access Charter sets out the expectations that customers can have of the council in terms of customer service, process and timescales, and accessibility when they contact the council through a range of different methods. It also establishes how customers can help us to continue in delivering an excellent customer experience.
15. The customer care standards outlined within this document apply to all officers from across the organisation so that any customer who is contacting the council receives a consistent experience with high standards of customer service. The standards will be reinforced through operational procedures for staff to ensure a consistent process which enables an excellent customer experience with every contact. This will be delivered alongside engagement and training to be carried out upon the implementation of the policy and to new members of staff through the Corporate Induction.
16. The full charter is available in appendix A with specific areas for consideration highlighted below:

Supporting self- service

17. The Customer Charter reflects the benefits of self-service to both customers and the council and encourages customers to access automated services digitally through the councils' websites where possible. This will help to enable capacity across the council to be focused on customer contacts which require greater face-to-face or telephone support including for complex cases.
18. The service will continue to invest in the development of digital services to help ensure that these are easy and accessible to use for both our staff and customers, and will ensure that up to date customer contact details, including email address and phone number, are captured and recorded at every opportunity.

Appointments and visiting service

19. Whilst self-service will be encouraged for customers, there are some cases where a face-to-face appointment is required, including for complex cases, and depending on customer needs and preferences. Appointments are available for all customers who need to visit the council in person and customers will be encouraged to book an appointment prior to visiting to ensure that an officer is available to speak to them with minimal waiting times.
20. The council will maintain a visiting service to customers in their own homes in order to help them to complete service requests and applications for more complex services such as Housing Benefits applications. This visiting service will be available via appointment to all customers who need help or are unable to access the service by themselves and are also unable to visit a customer services centre because of factors such as a disability, health- related issues, or caring responsibilities.

Aligning corporate sign off's

21. Corporate sign off's on letters and other forms of correspondence and communication from the council to customers should be standardised across the council and different departments as part of the operational procedures to be followed for customer care. This will help to ensure that communication from the council is presented in a consistently clear manner which is recognisable to customers and meets the high customer service standards that both organisations aims to deliver.

Printed communication

22. One benefit of an assisted self-service approach is that it helps to support the council's Green Agenda and discourages the use of printing and letters wherever possible. However, there will always be a need for some letters to be printed and posted out. Where digital contact is not possible letters should be sent to customers using the council's hybrid mail services and in line with the following printing principles:
 - Printed customer communication should be:
 - Mono
 - Single sided or duplex
 - No more than 2 sides

General contacts

22. There is currently a large volume of contact being received through the general council email address (contact@chorley.gov.uk) and general enquiry contact forms, with

1,200 emails being received at each council in a typical month in addition to 2,000 general contact enquiry forms from Chorley residents and businesses. This can provide a convenient way for customers to contact the council outside of office hours or if they are unable to phone the council for a query that cannot be resolved through the websites.

23. However, due to the large volumes of contact being received in this way, officer resources are required to manually monitor, action and respond to these contacts, which is placing additional and unnecessary demands on the service and also preventing a timely response for customers.
24. It is therefore recommended that the current general contact form and the general council email addresses are removed from the website and replaced with a new enquiry form, which will automate distribution of digital enquiries to the relevant specialist teams. This will also allow for the form to collect all information required to process the relevant enquiry and will prevent the need for officers to re-contact customers to request additional information or make further clarifications.
25. It is also proposed that when a customer sends an enquiry to the general council email addresses that an automated response is sent to explain the inbox is no longer active and to provide a link to the new enquiry form.
26. This change will mean that contacts are logged and automatically allocated to the right service area or directly into the relevant document management systems resulting in a more responsive service for customers.

Member Contact

23. Members will continue be able to get into contact with specialist services areas or submit service requests or enquiries on behalf of customers through the contact centre. As Members often escalate important issues from our customers, it is recommended that a process for coordinating and responding to member enquiries is established, alongside technology to facilitate and manage service requests for members. This will help to ensure that members who contact Customer Services receive responses and resolutions in a timely manner, providing clearer communication and allowing feedback and updates to be shared with residents more easily.

Uniforms

24. It is recommended that staff across the shared Customer Services should be provided with a uniform to help customers to identify staff within the customer services front office and to present a consistently smart and recognisable identity for each council's customer service base.
25. It is proposed that uniforms would be plain, with a different colour tie/ scarf for each council to maintain the separate identity of each council within the shared service.
26. Examples of the proposed uniform are available via the links below, and it is proposed that the council would provide grey shirts/ blouses, black jackets, and coloured council ties/ scarves, alongside an allowance for trousers.

[Women's Slash Neck Blouse, Pale Grey](#)

[Women's Wrap Front Blouse, Pale Grey](#)

[Men's Long Sleeve Shirt, Mid Grey](#)

[Men's Short Sleeve Shirt, Mid Grey](#)

[Men's Printable Softshell](#)

[Ladies Chiffon Scarf](#)

[Horizontal Ribbed Polyester Ties](#)

[Women's Printable Softshell](#)

[One Button Jacket, Black Twill](#)

27. The total costs of this for staff across both councils would be £4,525, or £2,262 per council, with funding available within current service budgets.

Directing specialist customer contacts

28. Current services and council processes do not always enable access to specialist services at the first point of contact as outlined in the vision and principles for shared customer services. The following changes have been considered to help facilitate this and to align processes across both councils in line with the shared services model.

Handovers and processes

29. A review of key customer facing processes has been carried out to identify areas which may need to be reviewed to align the role of customer services across both councils and in line with the principles developed for the shared customer services model. The full list of processes and recommendations is available at appendix C and highlights customer facing processes which could be completed by specialists in the back office or digitised to reduce handovers and duplicated work whilst having a minimal impact on service area staff.
30. If contacts for specialist services are directed to service areas or digitised, officers will be able to speak to customers and provide access to specialist services at the first point of contact in line with the shared services model. This will help to reduce the volume of calls managed by the customer contact centre and manage issues such as call-backs, whilst ensuring that customers receive a resolution at the first point of contact.
31. This review has also aimed to align processes across councils, ensuring consistency for customer services staff.
32. For Chorley Council, the proposed changes include the transfer of vehicle plate/ driver badge applications from being manually completed by Customer Services Officers, and then transferred to the ancillary team to issue badges and plates, to being completed online via self-service prior to being verified by the Customer Services team.

<p>Issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current processes do not always align with the principles of the shared services operating model, enabling customers to be able to access specialist services at the first point of contact • The processes completed within customer services/ Gateway currently differ across the councils, causing inconsistencies for staff
<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Key customer facing processes are aligned as outlined in appendix C for Housing and Licensing services. For Chorley Council this means that self-service online vehicle plate/ driver badge applications will be introduced, with access to public computers and assistance from officers within the front office if required.</p>

Duty Officers Process

33. To support the shared services model, the following principles have been proposed to be implemented alongside the Customer Access Policy to ensure cover for customer contacts in front facing areas:
- All customer service contact which could be accessed by customers through self-service or via information available on the council website should continue to be resolved by customer services staff, or other officers across the council, where customers are unable to access this themselves.
 - More specialist processing, case work or complex enquiries should be handled by service areas to enable direct access to a service specialist.
 - Heads of service will manage availability of staff across the councils in line with the Workplace Strategy, which sets out that staff will be able to work and respond to contact in line with service need.
 - For front-facing customer areas, duty officers will be required during opening hours to ensure that customers are able to have their enquiries resolved at the first point of contact. Duty officers will provide access to services covering all types of customer contact, including face-to-face where there is a customer demand for this.
 - Service managers will make arrangements for duty officers in line with the requirements and needs of their service for example, on a rota basis. Some services may require more than one duty officer to be available at any one time depending on the level of customer contact and demand.
34. Front-facing services where duty officers will be required have been identified in relation to specialist customer contacts and include:
- Housing
 - Planning

- Licensing
- Communities
- Environmental Health
- Waste
- Council Tax
- Revenues and Benefits

35. The Customer Access Policy document will be updated with direct contact information for relevant service areas to provide direct access to specialists where this is most appropriate. Identified duty officers will also be set up on the councils’ telephony system to ensure consistency with customer services staff.

Issue
In line with the shared services model, back office services will need to be available to resolve customer contacts relating to specialist or complex areas.
Recommendation
Service managers ensure that office cover is provided to enable customers to access specialist services at the first point of contact.

Opening hours

36. The current opening hours for each council are outlined below. It is not proposed that any changes to current opening hours are made at this time.

Chorley	South Ribble
Phone lines open 8am-6pm Monday- Friday Opening hours- 8.45 am- 5pm	8.30am-5.15pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am-5.15pm Wednesday 8.30am-4.45pm Friday
Weekly hours access	
50	41.75

Monitoring and implementation

37. This paper sets out the vision and goals for Customer Services across Chorley and South Ribble Councils, but there will be a transition period during the implementation and embedding of the new model.

- 38. The charter will be delivered in practice through customer services staff and all officers across the council who are in contact with customers. This will be embedded through training and engagement for staff once the policies are implemented, all new officers to receive training on customer services as part of the Online Induction, and updated protocols and operational procedures for staff.
- 39. The success of the Customer Access Charter and Feedback Policy will be reflected through the collection of complaints as outlined in the feedback policy, customer satisfaction surveys that are regularly carried out across both councils, and the council submitting applications for the Customer Excellence Standard which externally assesses customer service against several key criteria and will provide assurance against the quality of customer experience.
- 40. The ongoing performance of customer service will also be monitored by local indicators, set out below. Whilst the individual councils remain sovereign, it is proposed that the performance measures are aligned across the councils to allow for consistently high operational standards across the service. Both councils have a shared vision for an excellent customer experience, and shared performance targets will help for this to be prioritised equally across the councils.
- 41. The current performance measures for each council include:

	Current Indicator	Target
Chorley	% of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds	100%
	Abandoned rate	10%
South Ribble	% of telephone calls answered within 90 seconds	40%
	Abandoned rate	15%

- 42. It is proposed that the abandoned call rate is removed as a local indicator, based on feedback from the Shared Services Joint Committee which highlighted that this is not always a useful measure due to the variety of reasons that a call is abandoned, including customers deciding to use the council website instead of remaining in a call queue.
- 43. The targets for the new measures will be staged over a 3 year period to allow for the improvement and development of the service as the new customer access charter is implemented, alongside digital improvements to customer services.

	Indicator	New Target 23/24	24/25	25/26
Chorley	% of customers satisfied with the service they received	60%	70%	80%
	Average wait time < 5 minutes	40%	55%	70%
South Ribble	% of customers satisfied with the service they received	60%	70%	80%
	Average wait time < 5 minutes	40%	55%	70%

44. Alongside the local indicator targets, the following service standards have been identified and set as part of the Customer Access Charter:
- Contact by telephone to be answered within 90 seconds
 - Electronic contact (email or website) to be acknowledged within 1 working day and responded to within 2 working days
 - Contact in writing to be responded to within 7 working days
 - In person visits to be seen within 10 minutes of waiting
45. The following actions will also be delivered in order to develop and implement the aligned processes:
- Establish operational procedures in line with the aligned policy and provide training for all officers on the new processes.
 - Establish a new process for the coordination and response to member enquiries.
 - Implement an improved online form solution to the current general enquiry contact.
 - Identify and establish duty officers for key service areas, engaging with service areas to embed the new model for delivery.
 - Review direct dials and contact information available to customers to provide direct access to specialist services.

Feedback Policy

46. The Feedback Policy works alongside the Customer Access Charter to set out the proposed approach to complaints, compliments and other forms of feedback taking into account best practice and the findings of internal audit recommendations.
47. The policy aims to set out a clear framework for dealing with complaints including key responsibilities and time frames allocated. The policy is set out clearly so that it can be followed easily by customers and officers and includes processes for recording and monitoring feedback so that it can be used to review and improve services across the council.

Process

48. The process will follow these stages:

Informal Stage

Resolving any simple complaints (e.g. missed bins) at point of contact to reduce the use of formal complaint process and provide solutions for customers quickly.

Stage One: Investigation

The complaint is documented centrally and referred to the relevant officer for investigation. The findings and any solution are communicated to the customer within 10 working days.

Stage Two: Senior Management

If a customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage one, the complaint will progress to stage two which will see the complaint considered by the relevant head of service or director. A response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt and will be the final response from the Council.

49. Key changes from the current policies for each council and the new feedback policy are outlined below:

	South Ribble	Chorley	Proposed	Rationale
Stages of process	<p>Stage 1- Team Leader/ Manager</p> <p>Stage 2- Manager/ Director</p>	<p>Stage 1- Service Lead/ Manager</p> <p>Stage 2- Chief Executive</p>	<p>Stage 1- Team Leader/ Manager</p> <p>Stage 2- Head of Service/ SMT</p>	<p>The middle ground between the approaches of each council has been taken to ensure that complaints are only escalated to the Chief Executive where required. More serious complaints will be escalated straight to the Chief Executive to ensure a quick solution.</p>
Timescales	<p>Acknowledge within 3 working days</p> <p>Stage 1 to be responded to in 10 working days.</p> <p>Stage 2 to be responded to in 20 working days</p>	<p>Acknowledge within 5 working days</p> <p>Stage 1 to be responded to in 10 working days.</p> <p>Stage 2 to be responded to in 10 working days</p>	<p>Acknowledge within 3 working days</p> <p>Stage 1 to be responded to in 10 working days.</p> <p>Stage 2 to be responded to in 10 working days.</p>	<p>Timescales for responding to customers have been shortened wherever possible to ensure quick resolution of complaints whilst still maintaining realistic timeframes</p>
Approach to compliments and general feedback	<p>Feedback policy in place</p>	<p>No specific approach to general feedback</p>	<p>All forms of feedback including complaints and compliments considered in the policy</p>	<p>The policy includes a clear process for all types of feedback to ensure that we are able to learn from not only formal complaints but compliments and also general feedback which has not progressed to a formal complaint.</p>

Climate change and air quality

50. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

51. The Integrated Impact Assessment identifies no negative impacts on customers. The proposed Charter and customer care standards should make it easier for all customers to access council services.

Risk

52. The main risk for the proposals is disruption to service delivery whilst changes are being implemented. Full staff engagement and training will be carried out to ensure that any impact is minimised.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

53. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Clearly the improvements to the way we deal with customers, and use the technology and systems available to us, will enable the council to make the best use of resources.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

54. Following robust customer service policies should reduce the risk of successful complaints to the Ombudsman and negative audit reports.

Appendices

Appendix A- Customer Access Charter

Appendix B- Feedback Policy

Appendix C- Duty Officer Processes

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Caroline Winstanley (Transformation Co-ordinator)	caroline.winstanley@chorley.gov.uk		12.12.2022

Customer Access Charter



Introduction

We are committed to providing the highest level of service possible and strive to continue to develop and improve services so that they are customer focused, accessible, and meet the needs of all our customers.

This Customer Access Charter supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy and the strategic objective to 'deliver an even better customer experience and increase access to services for everyone.' The aim of the Charter is to set out our approach to customer services and outline what you can expect from us when you access our services.

How we apply this Charter

The Customer Access Charter will be applied whenever you have any form of contact with the Council. The Charter is relevant to all of our customers, both internal and external, and will be applied by all council staff, regardless of the level of contact that they have with customers during their normal duties.

Our objectives

To ensure that we are providing you with the highest level of customer care, the Charter has the following objectives:

- To establish consistent customer care standards across the Council
- To set out our commitment to you as our customer
- To establish the measures that will be put in place to monitor and manage the policy's implementation.

What you can expect from us?

The council is committed to providing the best possible customer experience. This means that you can expect that:

- We will ensure that our services can be accessed **quickly and conveniently online** through the council's website to provide easy access to all the information and services that you need.
- We will support you to be able to access services through the **channel of your choice** and will enable all customers to be able to access digital services online, either from their homes or through the self-serve facilities available at the council.
- If you need to speak to us directly about an enquiry or service request, we will aim to resolve this at the **first point of contact** wherever possible.
- You will have direct access to **service specialists** who are able to handle resolutions quickly and effectively.
- If your contact cannot be resolved straight away, we will keep you **informed and updated** about the progress of your contact and when you can expect a response.

- We will support all customers to access services and will support information to be available in other formats such as a different language, Braille or large print if you request this.
- We will aim to ensure that you only need to **contact us once** for your request by making sure that we collect all necessary information at the first point of contact.

Our Customer Care Standards

Our Council website is accessible at any time and is the quickest and most convenient way to access council services including to:

- Access information about council services
- Submit service requests, report issues, apply for services and make payments

When you contact the Council, we will aim to support you to use online services wherever possible but we also offer a range of choices for accessing our services.

If you contact us via telephone we will aim to:

- Answer your call promptly- if you are passed onto a specialist officer to complete your enquiry, we aim to answer the phone within 90 seconds.
- Greet you, let you know who you are speaking to at the Council and ask how we can help you.
- If the person taking the initial call cannot answer your query, it may be necessary to connect you to a colleague. We will tell you who you are being transferred to and why. The colleague receiving the transfer will be updated so that they do not have to repeat information.
- If we cannot answer your query straight away, we will take your name and number and will ensure that we call you back in a timely fashion. We will keep you updated about when you can expect a response.

If you contact us via electronic contact such as email, text or via the website we will aim to:

- Acknowledge your enquiry within 1 working day and let you know when a full response can be expected. This may be an automated message.
- Provide a full response within 2 working days. If this timescale cannot be met, you should receive an explanation for the delay and an indication as to how long a full response is expected to take.
- Make it clear who is answering your enquiry, using standard email signatures with names, job titles and contact details so that you know who you are speaking to.
- Reply using clear and jargon-free language.

If you contact us in writing, we will aim to:

- Provide a full response within 7 working days. If this timescale cannot be met, you should receive an explanation for the delay and an indication as to how long a full response is expected to take.
- Include the name of the person who is dealing with your enquiry and how you can contact them within our response.
- Use our clear print guidelines to ensure that printed letters are easy to read such as for customers with visual impairments or dyslexia.

If you visit us in person, we will aim to:

- Not keep you waiting for more than 10 minutes before being seen.
- Deal with your query without passing you on to someone else. If this is not possible, we will explain to you who you are being passed on to and why.
- Offer appointments for all customers who need to visit the Council in person, booking an appointment prior to visiting will help to ensure that an officer is available to speak to you and that you will be seen timely.

We offer a visiting service for some services for those who cannot leave their own homes for an appointment at the Council offices. If we are visiting you in your home, we will:

- Let you know in advance who will be visiting you.
- Agree an appointment time and keep you informed if a delay occurs.
- Present ID cards displaying names upon arrival, providing an opportunity for you to check that we are from the Council.

How you can help us:

You can help us to deliver an excellent customer service by:

- Providing us with all the information that we need in order to help you.
- Using the Council website to find out information and access services where you can, as this is the quickest way to access our services.
- Consider setting up online accounts or direct debits so that our services can be delivered to you automatically.
- Treating our employees fairly and with honesty so that we can ensure that you get the services that you need.
- Helping us to improve by offering feedback on our services.

Contact details

- You can contact us via our website at www.chorley.gov.uk
- You can contact us via phone from 8am-6pm Monday to Friday except for bank holidays on 01257 515151. Our out of hours emergency service is available on 01257 515142.
- If you have made an appointment to visit us, our Civic Offices are at Union Street, Chorley, PR7 1AL and are open from 8.45am-5pm. You can also write to us at the following addresses:

Benefits, Business Rates and Council Tax

PO Box 13
Chorley
PR7 1AR

All other service enquiries including housing, planning, licensing, and environment

Civic Offices
Union Street
Chorley
PR7 1AL

Insurance Claims

Risk and Insurance Office
Chorley and South Ribble Borough Councils
Civic Centre
West Paddock
Leyland
PR25 1DH

Other Policies

The Customer Access Charter operates alongside other policies which are outlined below:

Feedback policy

The Feedback Policy sets out the Council's approach to complaints, comments and feedback. Feedback is important for continuing to improve and develop our services and ensuring that we can be responsive to customer needs and concerns. If you contact us about a complaint we will:

- Approach complaints fairly and impartially
- Meet response deadlines wherever possible
- Explain the procedure that is set out in the Feedback Policy and when you can expect a response.

Whilst the Council encourages feedback and comments to help us to improve our services, we will aim to avoid contact that is not of value to you or the Council. By ensuring that you are provided with all the information that you need and are updated on the progress of enquiries, we hope to reduce the level of avoidable contact so that we can offer a better quality of customer service.

Accessibility

Our accessibility statement sets out how we ensure our services can be accessible by all. On our website, you can change the colour, contrast level and font through the accessibility tool, Browse Aloud, and can listen to the website using a screen reader. Translations for common services are available on the website for British Sign Language users.

We will provide information in different formats on request such as large print, easy read, audio recording or braille. If you are contacting us by phone or visiting us in person we can provide a text service for people who are deaf, hearing impaired or have a speech impediment.

Our offices have audio induction loops, or we can arrange a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation and application of the Charter will be monitored through corporate and local performance indicators including:

- % of calls answered within 90 seconds
- Average wait time
- Overall customer satisfaction with the service they have received by the council

Feedback to the Council including complaints are also monitored and reported on to allow us to continue to develop and improve.

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Feedback Policy

For Comments, Compliments and
Complaints



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Introduction

This document sets out how Chorley Council manages and responds to customer comments, compliments, and feedback.

We are committed to providing high quality customer services, and this policy supports our continuing commitment to improve services. We want to recognise good practice, and also investigate when things have gone wrong.

The views of our customers are important to the council. They help us to:

- Shape services to support the needs of our communities
- Provide an insight into where we are performing well, and where we can improve
- Provide a responsive service that changes and adapts in accordance with customer need.

Process

The processes below detail what to expect when providing different types of feedback to the Council. The Council will aim to resolve problems at the time they are brought to our attention. Where possible, we aim to do this informally at the first point of contact to allow for issues to be resolved quickly.

Comments

A comment is a volunteered personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by a customer. Unless specifically requested, there is not an automatic assumption that the Council will reply to comments. All comments are considered by the relevant officers, and a reply will be issued where appropriate.

Compliments

A compliment is defined as a customer statement of positive recognition or praise for a service or member of staff. Compliments are forwarded onto the relevant officer, and amongst teams and service areas to celebrate good work and practice and promote continued improvement and excellence.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern made by the customer about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the Council and its staff, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

The complaints procedure **should not** be used in the following circumstances:

- A request for service
- To make a report where there is a separate form available (e.g. fly tipping or missed bin collections)
- An appeal against a decision

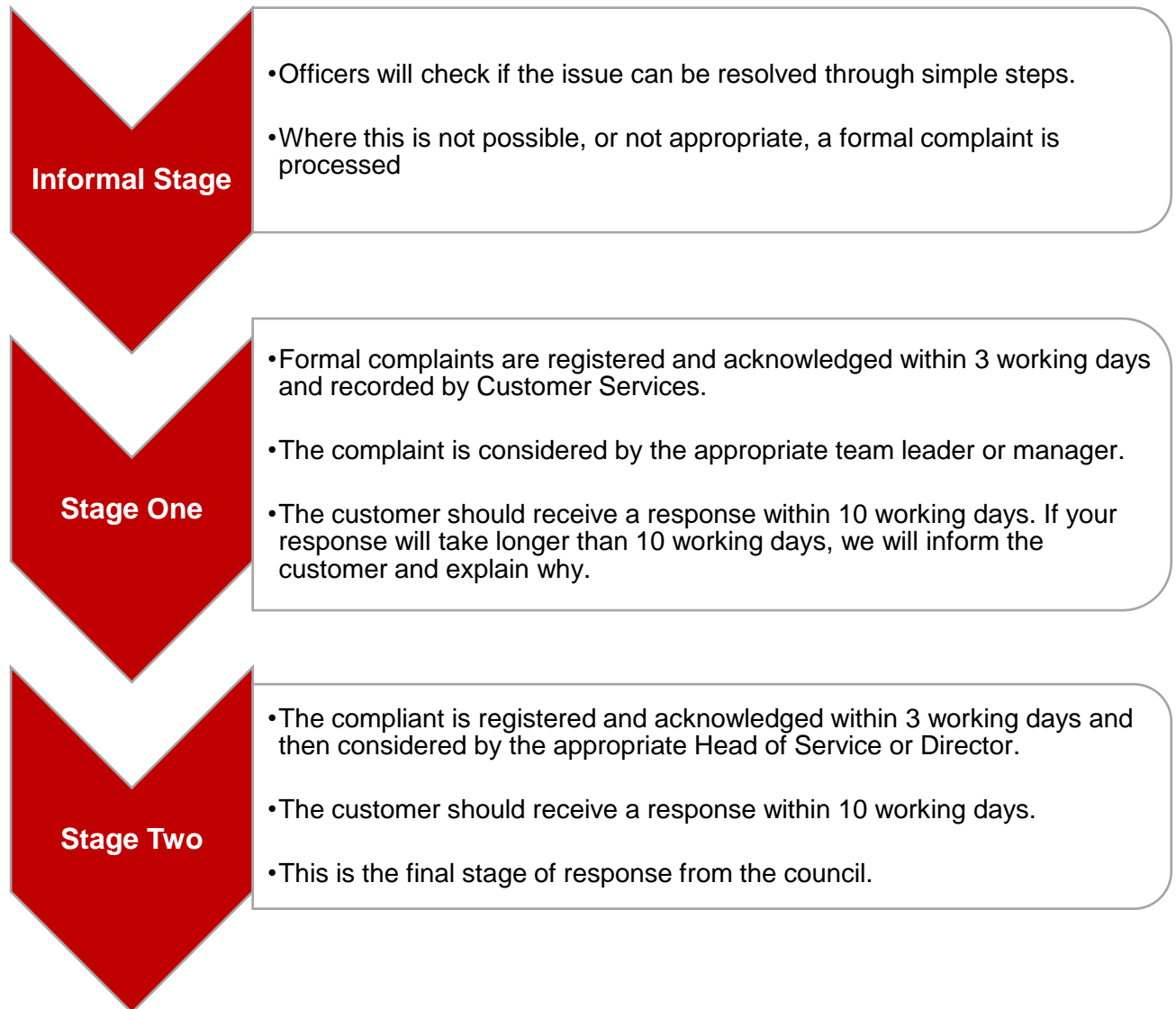
Further information about exemptions to the complaints procedure are outlined on page 5 of the policy.

Complaints Process

The complaints process follows three stages. We will aim to resolve and provide a solution to any issues or complaints informally wherever possible as this offers the quickest resolution for our customers. If we are unable to resolve the issue informally, complaints will follow the process set out below.

In all cases, officers responding to complaints are encouraged to speak with complainants during the investigation of the complaint to gain a greater understanding of the nature of the complaint and collect all relevant information.

To contact the council about a complaint, use the online form on our website or contact Customer Services at 01257 515151.



Local Ombudsman

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the response from the Council after the two stages, they can contact the Local Government Ombudsman who can be contacted via:

- [The Local Government Ombudsman Website](http://www.lgo.org.uk) at www.lgo.org.uk
- In writing:
The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
- Telephone: 0845 602 1983
- Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Feedback Received via Social Media

The Council receives an increasing amount of feedback via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Where possible comments, compliments, and services requests are dealt with at the first point of contact, which in many cases will involve a response using social media. Complaints received through social media will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Process.

Exemptions

Some complaints are subject to automatic escalation or have dedicated procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals so will not be considered through the standard complaints process. Serious complaints are likely to be escalated directly to the Chief Executive.

Nature of Complaint	Automatic Escalation
Allegations of financial impropriety	Chief Executive
Allegations of discrimination or harassment	Head of Human Resources
Allegations of criminal behaviour against the Council or a member of staff	Chief Executive
Complaints against elected members or Chief Officers	Director of Governance for Members. Chief Executive for Chief Officers. Executive Leader for Chief Executive.

The complaints process outlined above will not be

used to deal with the following matters and we will advise customers during the informal stage whether it would be appropriate for the complaint to be received through a different channel.

- where there is a statutory appeal process in place to enable customers to challenge decisions. Examples would include planning applications and housing benefit entitlement.
- where complaints relate to issues that are greater than 12 months old unless the Chief Executive or Director determines that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant investigation.
- complaints made by our suppliers, partners, and other public authorities regarding our business relations.

Unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complaints

The council recognises that occasionally customers may exert pressure on the authority when making a complaint, but in most cases, this is reasonably and acceptable.

A small minority of complainants may pursue their complaints in a way that can impede the investigation of their complaint or pose a significant and disproportionate resource requirement on the authority. Such actions can occur during the investigation of a complaint, or once investigations have been completed. In these cases, a complainant may be considered unreasonably persistent.

Unreasonable complaints and violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's procedures.

Confidentiality

The Council will maintain confidentiality of all personal information, and the privacy policy should be referred to when understanding how the Council processes information. Records of complaints will be stored securely, and access will be limited to officers who have a valid need to access information in order to deal with the complaint. Records will be disposed of in strict accordance with government guidance.

Learning from Feedback

The Council values feedback and uses it to inform service planning and to help shape services that support customer needs. Learning from feedback provides an opportunity for officers to review feedback and identify any lessons learnt, and corrective action taken.

Feedback Monitoring

All complaints and responses will be stored centrally by the Customer Services team to allow for regular monitoring and capturing of feedback. Any complaints received by members of officers should be directed to Customer Services who will register all complaints that are received by the Council. officers who are responding to a complaint should ensure that a copy is provided to Customer Services prior to responses being sent out.

Feedback and complaints information will be reported to the Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder on a regular as part of the Corporate Performance monitoring process.

The Feedback Policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it continues to reflect the feedback channels of the Council. It may be reviewed prior to the two-year review period if statutory requirements change.

Handovers and Processes

LICENSING:

1st AUGUST 2022 to 20th OCTOBER 2022

	SOUTH RIBBLE				Average time per week	CHORLEY				Average time per week
Enquiry Type	Time Taken per enquiry	Face to Face	Tel	Email		Time Taken per enquiry	Face to face	Tel	Email	
DBS Application	45 mins	42	N/A	N/A	2 hr 43 mins	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Vehicle Plate Application	15 mins	0	N/A	N/A	0	15 min	20	N/A	N/A	26 minutes
Drivers Badge Application	1 hour	5	N/A	N/A	26 minutes	1 hour	1	N/A	N/A	5 minutes
Knowledge Tests/CSE Tests	5 mins	71	N/A	N/A	31 minutes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Application verification	5 mins	N/A	N/A	37	16 minutes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Current processes

Process	South Ribble	Chorley	Recommendation
<u>DBS Application</u>	The initial DBS Application for licensing is completed by Customer Services Officers and the driver is then signed up for automated annual renewals.	DBS Applications are accessed via the website and are dealt with by an external provider, TaxiPlus	That it is explored whether DBS applications at South Ribble should be dealt with directly through an external provider. This will improve capacity for South Ribble customer services staff with no impact on the Licensing team and offer a more streamlined customer experience, with customers able to contact the external provider for any follow up calls.
<u>Vehicle plate/ driver badge applications</u>	Drivers badge applications and vehicle applications are available to complete online via self-serve, which is then emailed to Customer Services to verify the application. Once verified, application is then completed for Licensing to authorise and produce the badges & plates.	Once vehicle applications and driver badge applications have been completed by Customer Services Officers, the application is handed over to the Ancillary Team to issue badges and plates.	To continue to promote self-serve applications and introduce this functionality at Chorley. If applicants have no access to a computer, they can use public computers in the council offices and access guidance/ assistance from an officer if required.

<u>Knowledge tests</u>	Supervised by Customer Services Officers and then scanned & sent to Licensing to mark, they are then sent back to Customer Services to upload to Firmstep and advise customer of outcome.	Knowledge Tests are dealt with by the Ancillary Team	Outcome of tests at South Ribble to be uploaded and advised by Licensing staff to reduce handovers. This is expected to have a minimal impact on Licensing staff.
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HOUSING:

1st AUGUST 2022 to 20th OCTOBER 2022

Enquiry Type	SOUTH RIBBLE			Average time per week	CHORLEY			Average time per week
	Time Taken per enquiry	Face to Face	Tel		Time Taken per enquiry	Face to face	Tel	
Selectmove reset password Selectmove banding/bidding enquiry	10 mins	24	164	2 hr 42 mins	10 mins	94	Not known	1 hr 21 minutes
Roofless/homeless/threatened with homelessness presentations	1 hour	64	194	22 hr 18 mins	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Processing eviction letters	2 mins	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	

Current processes

Process	South Ribble	Chorley	Recommendation
Selectmove reset password Selectmove banding/bidding enquiry	Completed by customer services.	Completed by customer services.	Quick general enquiries to remain with customer services.
Roofless/homeless/threatened with homelessness presentations	Dealt with by customer services officers at first point of contact with a full triage script. A housing case is created on the housing database and then passed to the housing options officers to continue with case work.	Transferred to the duty/case officer	To be dealt with by Housing Duty Officers directly due to length of applications and potential for specialist advise. This will have an expected impact of housing FTE of approximately 0.6 FTE at South Ribble Housing.
Processing eviction letters	Scanning letter onto system and creating and posting out letter and leaflet by customer services team.		Eviction letters to be processed by the Housing Options Assistant officer due to more specialist nature. This is a quick task and expected to have a minimal impact on the

PLANNING:

No calls or enquiries regarding planning applications are dealt with by either South Ribble or Chorley Council, and they are currently transferred to the relevant planning officer.

Only payments for Planning fees or Building Control fees are taken by South Ribble Council, with minimal payments each month.

1st AUGUST to 20th OCTOBER 2022

	SOUTH RIBBLE		
Enquiry Type	Time Taken per enquiry	Face to Face	Tel
Payments for Planning Fees or Building Control Fees	2 mins	N/A	8

PROPOSAL:

No changes to either site.

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