



**Minutes of** **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move 2021**

**Meeting date** **Monday, 25 July 2022**

**Committee Members present:** Councillor June Molyneaux (Chair), Councillor Sarah Ainsworth (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Kim Snape

**Committee Members present Virtually:** Councillors Hasina Khan

**Officers:** Rachel Stewart (Housing Solutions Manager) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube](#) here

**1 Minutes of Meeting Tuesday, 15 March 2022, of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Select Move**

**Decision: The minutes were approved as a correct record.**

**2 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**3 Discussion with Councillor Matthew Lynch - Chorley Council Representative on Jigsaw Homes North Board.**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

**4 Discussion with Andy Gale - Allocation Policy Review Consultant**

The Task Group welcomed Andy Gale to the Task Group, who provided a brief synopsis of his work across the country working on allocation policies and highlighted potential changes to the Select Move allocations policy which was last updated in 2018.

An allocations policy ruled who was able to join the council's housing register. Every council was legally required to have an allocations policy, even if the council did not maintain a stock of housing.

Chorley, as part of the Select Move partnership faced the common problem that there were more people were on the housing register than available lettings. At the time of the meeting there were 2189 households on the register.

In the 2021/22 financial year, Select Move housed 1072 households. It was deemed to be a good figure, some councils were unable to house a sixth or an eighth of households on their lists.

Any changes that were proposed to the allocations policy would have to be approved by all three councils in addition to the Housing Associations that are a part of Select Move.

### Banding

Select Move categorised its housing list into five bands from A to E. This was unusual as most councils have three or four bands, with some on a two-band system.

Members felt that there was certain aspect of the banding that were unclear and too open to interpretation, such as medical issues and overcrowding.

Members agreed that a three-band system would be simpler, easier to understand and more user friendly.

### Quotas

There were quotas in place for bands A to D.

Band A 40%,  
Band B 30%,  
Band C 20% and  
Band D 10%.

Every applicant in every band was able to apply for any property, but any quota in place would give that band the priority.

A potential change to the allocations policy was to completely remove the quotas in place. The purpose of the banding quotas was to allow a mix of tenants in properties. Regardless if the banding remained or was removed, there would not be an increase in the number of properties on Select move.

### Local Housing Register

There was a common misconception that the housing list was a traditional waiting list, but this had not been the case since 1935. The housing register was a register of need, with those greatest in need being housed first rather than who had waited the longest. This misconception was a potential point of frustration for those that have been on the list for a period of time below band A.

The Select Move partnership have an open register, which allowed anyone to be put on the housing register, and then given a band between A to E depending on need. 50% of councils in England have scrapped their open register. This was to ensure that those with the highest need were housed and would prevent the requirement of verifying and checking applications from those very unlikely to be offered a property. The choice to have an open housing register was not deemed to be a partisan or a political issue.

Members agreed that Chorley should remain with an open list and that everyone had the right to access the housing register and believed that being perceived as selective and preventing access would be damaging to the system and the council.

### Local Connection

The criteria for 'local connection' was a concern for many users of Select Move. Select Move required an applicant to be a resident of Chorley for six of the previous twelve months to be eligible. A large number of councils follow government guidance that required two years of residency. There are some councils required five years of residency to apply for the housing register.

A consideration was required about those employed in Chorley and how far was too far to commute and qualify for a local connection. At present, 16 hours a week employment was required to qualify. It was suggested that a commute of more than an hour was required to qualify.

It was clarified that within the partnership of the three authorities, the local connection was to the area the applicant desired to move into.

### Offers

A change considered was the number of reasonable offers that users had before a penalty, at present, three offers could be refused before being removed from the list for 12 months. The reason for this was that the refusal of offers could result in properties being empty for longer. Most councils allow two offers.

It was said that all applications were initially sorted by a computer, but an Officer verified each application.

Members wanted to keep three offers to prevent pressured bidding and cited that there were properties that had over 100 bids and did not believe that a user not bidding would negatively impact the housing provider.

It was confirmed that the policy of housing partners withdrawing an offer if not replied to within two days was not likely to change.

### Financial Eligibility

Members raised concern that those with over £30,000 in savings were unable to register for Select Move, and it was questioned if this impacted older people and those with more extensive housing needs. It was clarified that it was amount saved and assets greater than £30,000 and household gross income of £60,000. The figure of £30,000 was considered high for councils in England, and the usual figure of savings was capped at £16,000

Homeowners were currently exempt from Select Move unless there was a physical need that their current house could not provide the needs they require.

## **5 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 17 August 2022 at 7pm.

Chair

Date