

Agenda

Environment, Health and Housing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 5 June 2018 at 6:30 pm
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes, FY8 1LW
Committee members:	<p>Councillor Ben Aitken (Chairman) Councillor Viv Willder (Vice-Chairman)</p> <p>Councillors Frank Andrews, Peter Anthony, Maxine Chew, Gail Goodman JP, Peter Hardy, Angela Jacques, John Kirkham, Roger Lloyd, Graeme Neale, Louis Rigby.</p>

Public Platform

To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with Article 15 of the Constitution.
 To register to speak under Public Platform: see [Public Speaking at Council Meetings](#).

	PROCEDURAL ITEMS:	PAGE
1	Declarations of Interest: Declarations of interest, and the responsibility for declaring the same, are matters for elected members. Members are able to obtain advice, in writing, in advance of meetings. This should only be sought via the Council's Monitoring Officer. However, it should be noted that no advice on interests sought less than one working day prior to any meeting will be provided.	1
2	Confirmation of Minutes: To confirm the minutes, as previously circulated, of the meeting held on 13 March 2018 as a correct record.	1
3	Substitute Members: Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 22(c).	1
	DECISION ITEMS:	
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DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	4
LYTHAM PARK CEMETERY - WINDBREAK CANOPY			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The report concerns the delivery of a new canopy on the exit to Lytham Park Cemetery Chapel.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Subject to 3, below,
 - (a) to approve the letting of the contract for construction of the canopy as per Appendix 2 in the sum of £59,365 to the lowest tenderer Handspring Designs.
 - (b) to approve remaining expenditure on the project as detailed in figure 2 of the report
2. To recommend to the Finance & Democracy Committee a funded budget increase of £50,000 to the Lytham Park Cemetery - Windbreak Canopy capital project within the Councils 2018/19 capital programme fully funded from the capital investment reserve.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Full Council 2 March 2016

Resolved - 1. To approve and adopt the recommendations of the Finance and Democracy Committee as follows:
 (c) The updated Five Year Capital Programme including the changes proposed by the Budget Working Group, as set out in Appendix G.

Environment, Health and Housing Committee 10 November 2015

Budget Setting – Prioritisation of Capital Bids.

After a discussion it was RESOLVED that the committee supported the proposed capital bid for further consideration by the Budget Working Group;

Environment, Health and Housing Committee 21st February 2017

It was RESOLVED to not support the scheme as proposed and seek a revised scheme with guidance from a small working group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of committee, representatives of the Crematorium Working Group and appropriate officers and that such a review incorporate a visit to the crematorium.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

Background

1. The Environment, Health and Housing Committee at its meeting on 10th November 2015 supported a capital bid for a scheme to improve the exit to the crematorium chapel at Lytham Park Cemetery. The proposal came from the Crematorium Working Group earlier in the year which looked at a number of matters at the Cemetery.
2. The scheme was subsequently approved by Council at the budget meeting on 2nd March 2016 in the sum of £60,000 titled; Lytham Park Cemetery - Windbreak Canopy. The scheme currently is identified within the 2018/19 financial year for delivery and expenditure.
3. Several schemes have been previously prepared and presented to members of the Environment Health and Housing Committee which were rejected. At the Environment Health and Housing Committee of the 21st February 2017 it was resolved to not support the scheme as proposed and seek a revised scheme with guidance from a small working group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of committee, representatives of the Crematorium Working Group and appropriate officers and that such a review incorporate a visit to the crematorium. The existing canopy structure can be seen in Appendix 1.
4. In January 2018 the Council approached Handspring Design; a specialist company who create bespoke timber structures. Handspring Design were engaged to come up with a number of design options which were presented to the Canopy Working Group in March 2018.
5. The preferred Option was selected and 4 variants were identified which incorporated varying amounts of glazing within the roof structure. The members of the Canopy Working Group liked the preferred option and agreed to go forward to tender with two options, Option 1 minimal glazing in the roof (See Appendix 2 roof triangles option 1) and Option 2 with 50% glazing within the roof (See appendix 2 roof triangles option 4). An oak framed hard wood glazed screen fronting the canopy was agreed together with an option of acetate coloured film on the vertical glazing within the roof canopy itself. It was agreed that up lighting would be explored.
6. Additional works that have been previously agreed will be included within the overall redevelopment of the crematorium exit. This includes the replacement of the existing toilet doors and the introduction of a quality paving scheme extending from the exit of the crematorium to the curtilage of the pedestrian area.

Scheme Details

7. In line with the recommendations of the Canopy Working Group this scheme is to provide shelter to the exit of Lytham Crematorium. This is to incorporate a windbreak in an aesthetically pleasing manner befitting the immediate surroundings. This canopy would be crafted from oak timber with exposed joints and rafters showing off the craftsmanship and detailing. It includes glazing to the roof to encourage light through to the exit and have a fixed incorporated windbreak made from toughened safety glass to deflect the wind away from the exit. The exit area will be renovated with existing fixtures upgraded and a new paving design in order to compliment the new structure.

Supply and Installation of the Oak Frame, Roof and Glazing Units

8. The proposed canopy is bespoke, complex and made up of a number of elements and therefore the procurement process needed to recognise this.
9. Due to the complex nature of the canopy the work was tendered on a 60% quality and 40% price ratio. With the quality element being evaluated on methodology, technical assistance and health and safety.
10. In line with the recommendations of the Canopy Working Group the work was tendered with two options, Option 1 Timber Canopy with Limited Glazing in the roof (See Appendix 2 roof triangles option 1) and, Option 2 Timber Canopy with 50% glazing within the roof (See Appendix 2 roof triangles option 4).

Procurement

11. A restricted tendering procedure was adopted for the procurement of services required to design, manufacture and install the canopy, which was tendered using The Chest, the North West's Local Authority Procurement Portal. A mid-range contract was used as the value of works and services are estimated to be £10,000 or more but less than £100,000 as per Fylde's guide to procurement, March 2018.
12. A specification of works was produced by the Technical Services team which formed the basis of the contract along with concept drawings, which the invited bidders used to build their tender submission.
13. Tenders were assessed following a consistent evaluation methodology in line with Fylde procurement best practice for both quality and price. The following criteria was applied to the quality element;
 - Technical suitability
 - Financial viability and stability
 - Quality systems
 - Customer care and after sales service
 - Experience and past performance
 - Aesthetic and functional characteristics
14. Tenders were sent to 3 companies –
 - [Fordingbridge](#)
 - [Handspring Designs](#)
 - [Able Canopies](#)

Handspring Designs returned a tender submission, Fordingbridge and Able Canopies declined to tender.

Tender Price – Figure 1

Description	Cost
Timber canopy with glazing option 1	£52,795
Timber canopy with glazing option 2	£57,415
Additional cost for constructing the frame in oak	£1,950

15. In consultation with the Canopy Working Group members agreed to recommend Option 2 (appendix 2 – Roof triangles 4) with the frame constructed in oak. The recommendation is to award the contract to Handspring Designs at a total tender price of £59,365 (£57,415 + £1,950).

Zinc Roofing

16. Due to the complex and specialist nature of fabricating the roof a separate procurement process was undertaken for this work. It is estimated that the value of the work is under £10,000 and is therefore classed as a small contract. The Technical Services team have struggled to source companies to price for the works. It is proposed to engage a specialist bespoke roofing contractor T G Roofing and set a budget of £10,000 to undertake the work.

Existing Canopy Deconstruction, Groundworks, Paving and Joinery

17. Following the recommendations of the Canopy Working Group in relation to the canopy, work is now underway to design and specify the remaining elements of the project. The scheme being worked up for the paving is being done in consultation with a local dementia group to ensure the finished scheme takes account of dementia friendly design principles including legibility and contrast.

18. It is proposed to include elements of public art into the canopy structure with suitable carved literature quotations.
19. This work will be tendered in line with the Councils procurement strategy and the contract will be awarded to the lowest tenderer. It is currently estimated at £30,000.

Electrical Installations

20. The project requires minimal electrical work therefore the proposal is to use the council's existing electrical contractor engaged on day to day maintenance.

Finance

21. Currently there is a £60,000 budget within the Councils 2018/19 Capital Programme. Of this £3,500 has been used working up the design proposals so far.
22. The tender price for the fabrication of the canopy/frame (including installation) is £59,365 plus additional funding is required to undertake the zinc roofing, deconstruction of existing canopy, groundworks, paving, joinery and electrical work.

The total project cost – Figure 2

Description	Budget
Design	£3,500
Timber Canopy +Oak Frame (incl. installation)	£59,365
Zinc Roof covering	£10,000
Existing canopy deconstruction, foundations, groundworks, paving and joinery work to adjacent doors	£30,000
Electrical Work	£2,000
Contingency @ 4.9%	£5,135
Total	£110,000

23. The scheme budget of £60,000 originally set in 2015/16 was not based on a specific scheme and was simply an estimate of likely/expected scheme cost. Members of the Canopy Working Group are particularly pleased with the scheme that has now been worked up and feel it worthy of the costs involved.
24. However the scheme as costed leaves a shortfall within the budget of £50,000. In order to address this the recommendation to the Finance & Democracy Committee would be to request a funded budget increase of £50,000 to the Lytham Park Cemetery - Windbreak Canopy capital project within the Councils 2018/19 capital programme funded from the capital investment reserve.

Maintenance

25. The additional maintenance required to clean the windows and maintain the canopy can be funded from existing revenue budgets within the cemetery and crematorium and the Technical Services building maintenance team. The main oak structure if approved to be constructed from oak timber shall not need maintenance and shall weather appropriately.
26. The proposed structure, roof covering, glazing, electrics and drainage will require an annual maintenance inspection, uplifting the overall annual maintenance inspection work for the crematorium.

Programme

27. The following programme for delivery of the project in 2018 is proposed :

- 6th June - let the contract, for the construction of the canopy to Handspring Designs
- July - Start the deconstruction of the existing canopy and prepare groundworks
- September - Canopy erection
- October - Landscaping works to commence
- November - Scheme fully completed

Conclusion

28. In conclusion it has taken a considerable amount of time and resource to come up with a bespoke design solution which is unique, practical and more sympathetic to service users at Lytham Park Cemetery. The design will improve the look of the building and will provide shelter from the wind and rain when mourners are leaving Lytham Park Chapel. It will also provide a more suitable location to display family flowers exiting the Chapel.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report recommends to the Finance & Democracy Committee a funded capital budget increase of £50,000 to the Lytham Park Cemetery - Windbreak Canopy capital project in the Councils 2018/19 capital programme fully funded from the capital investment reserve and seeks authorisation of expenditure and the letting of the contract for construction of the canopy to the lowest tenderer Handspring Designs.
Legal	None arising from this report
Community Safety	The proposed works will benefit visiting residents by providing an architecturally striking sheltered area for the exiting congregation. In contrast the current crematorium exit is bleak on winter's day with the prevailing wind cutting through.
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	Submissions arising from the tendering of this work will be required to display specific Health and Safety information pertaining to the construction and installations of this proposed work. Furthermore the successful contractor will be required to safeguard the public and their own employees throughout this contract.

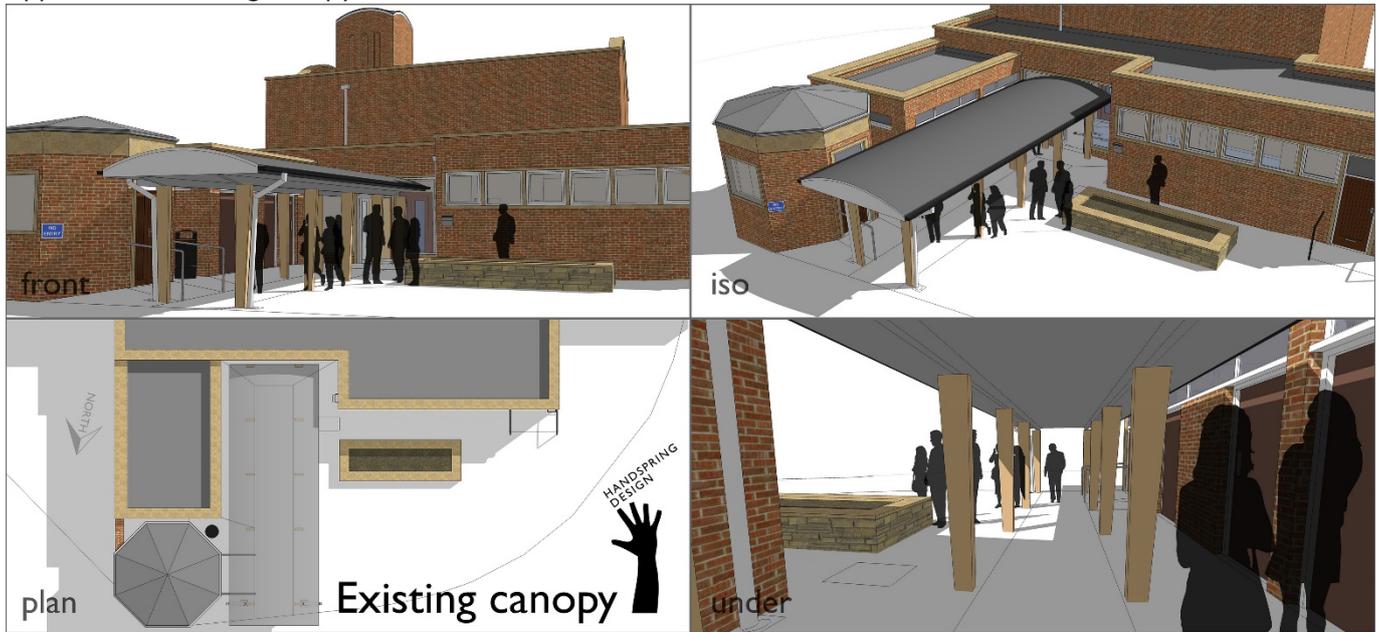
LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Darren Bell	Darren.bell@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658465	21 st May 2018

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

APPENDICES

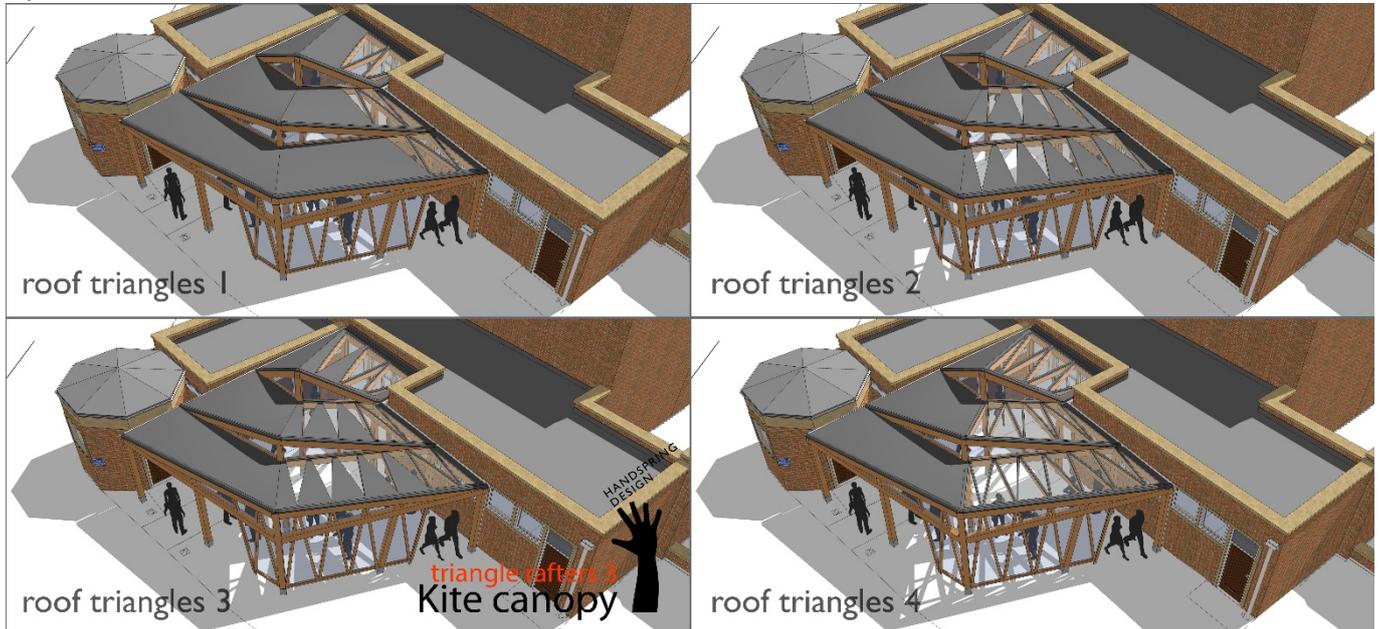
- Appendix 1 Existing canopy structure
- Appendix 2 Final concept drawings. Options 1-4
- Appendix 3 Risk Assessment

Appendix 1 – Existing canopy structure



Appendix 2 – final concept drawings

Option 1 – 4





Committee Risk Assessment Template

Directorate: Development Services		Date of Assessment: 16 th May 2018		
Section: Technical Services		Assessment Team: Jon Rutter		
Assessment Activity / Area / Type: Lytham Crematorium Canopy				
Do the hazards create a business continuity risk? No				
RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK OWNER / RISK REGISTER
Increased maintenance implication for Fylde Borough Council.	5	<p>Emphasis throughout the tender has been on quality, the requirement of quality materials and quality craftsmanship, in such this is hoped to bring down the whole life cost of the canopy. Insomuch as the timber it is expected to return a good overall structure lifespan, however incorporated elements such as glazing upstands and fittings, drainage and electrics have a limited lifespan and will require replacement at some point in the future.</p> <p>All additional assets should be inspected annually, having minimal cost implications but do need factoring when reviewing the maintenance budget for FY19/20.</p>	2	FBC

RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK OWNER / RISK REGISTER
Failure of contractor to deliver to specification	5	The work is to be implemented as a fixed price contract under the terms & conditions of the JCT Minor Works Contract. The Contract Administration is to be carried out by technical services team and all works to be completed as per design and specification. Part payments should be adopted and ratified by means of progress and signed off by the Technical services team.	2	FBC Awarded contractor
Possibility of personal injury to the public during the construction period.	4	<p>All contractors and subcontractors will prepare and submit their Construction Stage Health & Safety Plan as per their tender submission. The documentation will detail the safe operation of plant and machinery within the confines of each site and mitigation factors used whilst working in close proximity to members of the public:</p> <p>The Contractor will be using public paths to carry out works and expect machinery to traffic these areas. For this reason special control measures must be in exerted by the contractor and be robust enough to mitigate the mix of machinery and public.</p> <p>Areas of active construction will be fenced off and information provided about safety aspects of the construction site.</p>	4	FBC Awarded contractor

RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK OWNER / RISK REGISTER
Continued.....		Insurances - the contractor will carry £5m Public Liability insurance, and £10m Employers Liability insurance.		
The improvement works fail to meet community or stakeholder aspirations.	5	<p>It is with the hope that the extensive consultation and concept design reviews that the design meets both the community and stakeholders aspirations. However due to the bespoke nature of this work quality should be stringently managed, there is a risk of it not fulfilling expectations if quality was to be compromised in any part of the build. A site visit should be undertaken to the manufacturing premises to review the standard of workmanship for the timber frame before the scheduled date for erection.</p> <p>Furthermore due its bespoke nature the glazing shall be fitted not in a traditional manner. This fixing detail must be confirmed to be adequate and fulfill any assurances needed to ensure the durability and weather tightness of connections.</p>	2	FBC

RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK SCORE (Likelihood x Impact)	RISK OWNER / RISK REGISTER
Increased risks to the public as a result of the development.	2	<p>The roof glazing shall be laminated.</p> <p>The wind break shall comply with building regulations for glazing in critical locations.</p> <p>The paving has been designed to have a tactile edge to inform the public in change of surface level.</p>	5	FBC
Project not delivered on time and funding not utilised.	6	<p>The work is to be implemented as a fixed price contract under a JCT Minor Works Contract; this allows penalties for the late completion of the works giving the Contractor incentives to perform to the agreed programme.</p> <p>A contract shall be signed with the main contractor for the delivery of the canopy.</p>	3	FBC
Project overspend	4	<p>Technical services will monitor & control costs. The final contract sum must contain an element for contingencies and any extra works that deviate from the planning enhancement proposals must be sought from current council budgets.</p>	2	FBC

Risk Likelihood

- 6 = Very High
- 5 = High
- 4 = Significant
- 3 = Low
- 2 = Very Low
- 1 = Almost impossible

Risk Impact

- 1= Negligible
- 2 = Marginal
- 3 = Critical
- 4 = Catastrophic

Multiply the likelihood by the impact and if the score is above 12 then mitigating action should be undertaken to reduce the risk. This action should be recorded and monitored in either a directorate or corporate risk register.

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIORNMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	5

HOME OFFICE WIDENING DISPERSAL ASYLUM SEEKER PROGRAMME 2018

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

In 2016 local authorities across the North West were approached by the Home Office and the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) in relation to piloting the widening of procurement of accommodation for the dispersal of asylum seekers, to all local authorities across the United Kingdom. The government's approach previously had been to work with a number of larger metropolitan local authorities to secure suitable accommodation to procure asylum dispersal accommodation.

Asylum dispersal now takes part in 31 local authority areas in the North West, a significant and welcome increase on the numbers historically. Lancashire has participated in full and each Local Authority provided an initial pledge in 2015/16. Fylde Council pledged Serco could procure up to 5 properties. Within Fylde there are currently 2 properties that have been sourced, towards the initial pledge of 5, accommodating 11 service users. We are aware there is a future property in the pipeline, taking the total number of Asylum Seeker units in Fylde to 3.

The majority of local authorities in the North West are reaching their initial pledge figures, and the RSMP is keen to work with Government on this leading priority and support the Home Office and Serco in conversations with local authorities to enable them to build on their initial pilot figures. With further widening dispersal in mind, the Home Office have begun conversations with Lancashire Authorities asking for a commitment for an additional 30 properties each. This figure has been calculated using projected asylum growth figures, in order to meet forecast demands over the next 12-18 months, and is based on each local authority participating to the same level.

This report gives information on the background to widening dispersal of accommodation for asylum seekers across Lancashire and considers the request to increase procurement of properties alongside other competing Government priorities, namely the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 and the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Programme and Fylde Council's pledge to accommodate 5 families in 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATION

- Note the contents of the report regarding Government's Widening Dispersal Asylum Seeker programme and working with the Home Office and Serco to increase the pledge of numbers of properties Serco can procure within Fylde for asylum seeker accommodation, from 5 to 30.
- Consider this request alongside other competing Government priorities, namely the Homeless Reduction Act and the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Programme.
- Recommended Fylde Council agree to a further pledge of 15 properties for Serco to try to procure. This figure be revisited when Serco are close to reaching that number.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Environment, Health and Housing Committee – 5th January 2016

Information Item: Outline for member's information on the Home Office programme for the procurement of property to accommodate wider asylum dispersal.

Environment, Health and Housing Committee – 10th January 2017

Decision Item: Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children's and their Families Resettlement Programme.

It was RESOLVED to

1. Note the contents of the report regarding the Asylum Seeker Wider Dispersal Programme;
2. Note the contents of the report regarding the Lancashire Syrian Refugee families and Vulnerable Children and their families resettlement programmes;
3. Pledge that Fylde Council, under the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Resettlement Programmes, accommodate 5 families in 2019/20;
4. Commence negotiations with Lancashire County Council to establish how the available funding would be shared between Lancashire County Council and Fylde Council and how the various services are to be delivered and by which body; and
5. Note that a further report will be presented to update the committee on this matter during 2017/18.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

REPORT

Background

1. The Home Office is responsible for fulfilling the United Kingdom's obligations under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (The Geneva Convention) and ensuring that those genuinely fleeing persecution are given the protection they need.
2. To achieve this, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) provides a suite of statutory and elective support services for asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and refugees. Statutory provision is in accordance with the Immigration Asylum Act 1999, the Asylum Support Regulations 2000 and the EC Reception Conditions Directive 2003/9/EC.
3. The current Home Office provider of accommodation and transport for destitute asylum seekers in the North West is Serco. Serco Housing and Welfare Officers have safeguarding duties and are in regular contact with clients they accommodate. Serco run an initial accommodation facility in Liverpool, at which Migrant Help staff are permanently based.
4. Migrant Help, a non-government organisation, deliver independent advice and support through a national Asylum Help service which includes outreach and community development work in the North West.
5. Asylum Seekers are dealt with and processed through the Home Office contractor in the North West who is Serco. If they receive a positive decision on their asylum application they will then receive refugee status and be eligible for assistance from Government agencies. If they receive a negative decision they can appeal and if they lose it, can lead to deportation.

6. In 2012 the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) developed a protocol for the purpose of supporting the transition from the previous asylum contracts to the current contract. The protocol forms the vehicle for procurement consultation across all local authorities in the North West to whose areas asylum seekers are dispersed. Local authorities have no privity in the contract between the Home Office and Serco, and are under no statutory obligation to co-operate with either the Home Office or Serco. However, they are required to deliver a range of statutory services to asylum seekers, as well as ensuring that community resilience and service delivery is not materially tested.
7. In 2016 local authorities across the North West were approached by the Home Office and the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) in relation to piloting the widening of procurement of accommodation for the dispersal of asylum seekers, to all local authorities across the United Kingdom. The government's approach previously had been to work with a number of larger metropolitan local authorities to secure suitable accommodation to procure asylum dispersal accommodation. The North West Strategic Migration has been leading a consultation with UK Visas and Immigration across Lancashire / Cheshire on agreements to widen dispersal across the region.
8. Engagement with the procurement process allows local authorities to maintain a degree of influence over asylum dispersal. Local authorities are required to undertake Postcode Checks (PCC) in respect of every property Serco wishes to procure as dispersal accommodation. This influence can be used to limit and mitigate the adverse impacts of asylum dispersal by gathering feedback from the Police, Environmental Health and Private Sector Teams to inform where the property is in a suitable location.
9. Asylum dispersal now takes part in 31 local authority areas in the North West, a significant and welcome increase on the numbers historically. Lancashire has participated in full and each Local Authority provided an initial pledge in 2015/16. Fylde Council pledged Serco could procure up to 5 properties.
10. The widening dispersal work has taken place across the region, not in Lancashire alone, and is also being undertaken nationally.

Definitions

11. An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is waiting for a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee. In other words, in the UK an asylum seeker is someone who has asked the Government for refugee status and is waiting to hear the outcome of their application.
12. Persons applying for asylum in the UK are excluded from claiming most benefits and working as they are subject to immigration control in the benefit system. If a positive decision is made on an application for asylum, a person is no longer an asylum seeker and is granted one of the following statuses:
 - a. Refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention
 - b. Humanitarian protection
 - c. Discretionary leave to remain
 - d. Indefinite leave to remain.
13. Following a positive decision a person will be given 28 days to apply to the benefit system and vacate their accommodation. Persons will be entitled to apply to the local authority under homelessness legislation and if households are in priority need the local authority would have a duty to provide temporary accommodation. To date, Fylde Council have not received any homelessness presentations from persons awarded a positive decision to their asylum application to the Home Office.

Widening Asylum Accommodation Dispersal in Fylde

14. Appendix 1 contains Serco Ward Level Data as at 1st May 2018 for number of properties secured across Lancashire. Within Fylde there are currently 2 properties that have been sourced, towards the initial pledge of 5, accommodating 11 service users. We are aware there is a future property in the pipeline, taking the total number of Asylum Seeker units in Fylde to 3.
15. Since 2016 within Fylde, Serco have requested 33 PCCs, 8 have failed following feedback from the local authority and 3 have been withdrawn prior to the PCC being completed. Of those 8 that the local authority felt were unsuitable 6 were due to concerns regarding community cohesion, hate crime and anti-social

behaviour (ASB) and 2 due to the location being unsuitable. In addition 15 of the 22 properties that passed the PCC were subsequently not procured, see Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 – Postcode Checks for Serco completed by Fylde Council from 2016

PCC Response Fylde Council	Number of properties
Pass	22
Fail	8
Lost/Withdrawn prior to check	3
TOTAL	33

Table 2 – PCC reasons for failure

Reasons for failure	Number of properties
Cohension/Hate Crime/ASB	6
Unsuitable location	2
PASS PCC but procurement did not go ahead	15
Procurement process not successful	7
TOTAL	30

16. Serco have struggled to secure private rented accommodation within Fylde, due to the strength of the private sector market within the Borough. Properties that have passed the PCC check are often let, before Serco are able to negotiate with the Landlord.
17. Of the initial pledge of 5 properties that Serco can procure, they have successfully secured 3.
18. The Local Authority is satisfied Serco responds to concerns the local authority raises during the PCC process regarding community cohesion, ASB and suitable location and in these instances Serco will not go ahead with procurement of that property.
19. If a property passes the Postcode Check, Serco will carry out a full survey, and will negotiate with the landlord/agent the terms of the lease. All properties must meet the standard set out in the Home Office Statement of Requirements. This standard covers the physical condition of the property, as well as minimum requirements for fixtures, fittings, furniture and equipment.
20. Serco are responsible for housing management of the procured properties which covers; accommodation standards, contract management of clients, client safeguarding, links to Home Office case workers, supporting clients to access health and other services. There is also a requirement to have a close relationship with Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector, health and other agencies.

Further widening of Asylum Dispersal Accommodation

21. The majority of local authorities in the North West are reaching their initial pledge figures, and the RSMP is keen to support the Home Office and Serco in conversations with local authorities to enable them to build on their initial pilot figures. RSMP are keen to ensure that Serco and the Home Office undertake additional procurement in a way that is sustainable, and spread out over a managed period of time following agreed and established procurement request processes.
22. A main driver behind the widening dispersal was the need to reduce the numbers of Asylum Seekers in hotel accommodation nationally. The work done has meant that while there are no service users in hotel accommodation, the overall aim of redistributing the share of service users nationally across local authorities

has not been realised and some regional local authorities continue to carry a significant share of dispersed asylum seekers.

23. With further widening dispersal in mind, the Home Office have begun conversations with Lancashire Authorities asking for a commitment for an additional 30 properties each. This figure has been calculated using projected asylum growth figures, in order to meet forecast demands over the next 12-18 months, and is based on each local authority participating to the same level.
24. Widening dispersal has been undertaken cross the whole of the region, not just in Lancashire and each of the widening dispersal areas have been re-approached to build on their pilot numbers. Appendix 2 shows the number of asylum seekers accommodated within each district and the change since 2014.
25. RSMP, working with the Home Office and Serco are requesting Fylde Council pledge to enable Serco to procure a further 30 properties in the Borough. There are Officer concerns that such a figure would be meaningless, due to the difficulties Serco have faced in securing private sector accommodation within Fylde.

Conclusions

26. Fylde Council have pledged under the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Programme, to accommodate 5 families in 2019/20. The Council have begun negotiations with Lancashire County Council regarding taking forward this allocation and will be looking to source private sector accommodation. The request for widening dispersal of asylum seeker accommodation coincides with the local authority undertaking this work, and will be competing with Serco, to procure similar sized accommodation, within a very strong private sector market.
27. The Homelessness Reduction Act was implemented in April 2018 which places additional homelessness prevention and relief duties upon local authorities to work with all households to agree personal housing plans once they are within 56 days of facing homelessness. To source accommodation options Fylde Housing Services would be looking for solutions within both the private rented and social rented sectors. The service as a whole has seen an increase in presentations for housing advice from 355 in 16/17 to 517 in 2017/18.
28. Of the initial pilot pledge of 5, 3 properties have been secured since 2016 or 60%. The widening roll out is to run for a further 12-18 months. It is therefore recommended Fylde Council agree to working with Government on their leading priority for widening asylum seeker accommodation, with the Home Office, Serco and RSMP towards a further pledge of 10 properties for Serco to try to procure, in addition to the initial pledge of 5. Resulting in a maximum figure of 15 properties and this figure be revisited when Serco are close to reaching that number. This equates to 50% of the additional properties Serco are to attempt to procure within Fylde.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Asylum Policy		https://www.gov.uk/topic/immigration-operational-guidance/asylum-policy
Asylum Claims and the Dublin Regulations		https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/asylum-claims-and-the-dublin-regulations
Immigration statistics		https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release
Asylum Help UK		https://asylumhelpuk.org/

Attached documents

Appendix 1 - Serco Ward Level Data for Lancashire Authorities 01/05/2018

Appendix 2 – Numbers of Asylum Seekers accommodated across the North West

Appendix 1

Serco Ward Level Data for Lancashire Authorities 01/05/2018

Council	Population	Maximum asylum capacity	Current number of properties	Current number of service users	S.U% of maximum capacity	1st May 2018 SU % Available	1st May 2018 SU Numbers Available
Blackburn with Darwen	147489	350	94	361	103.1	-3	-11
Bolton	276786	1,385	299	1,107	79.9	20	278
Burnley	87099	436	16	54	12.4	88	382
Bury	185060	926	155	518	55.9	44	408
Cheshire East	370127	1852	0	0	0.0	100	1852
Cheshire West and Chester	329608	1649	14	57	3.5	97	1592
Chorley	107155	537	10	41	7.6	92	496
Fylde	75757	379	2	11	2.9	97	368
Halton	125746	631	0	0	0.0	100	631
Hyndburn	80734	404	5	22	5.4	95	382
Knowsley	145893	731	30	108	14.8	85	623
Lancaster	138375	690	29	131	19.0	81	559
Liverpool	466415	2,335	444	1,803	77.2	23	532
Manchester	503127	2,517	282	1,042	41.4	59	1475
Oldham	224897	1,124	234	868	77.2	23	256
Pendle	89431	448	5	13	2.9	97	435
Preston	140202	711	40	194	27.3	73	517
Ribble Valley	57132	287	4	18	6.3	94	269
Rochdale	211699	1,057	283	1,032	97.6	2	25
Rossendale	66982	336	29	96	28.6	71	240
Salford	233933	1,169	247	920	78.7	21	249
Sefton	273790	1367	27	110	8.0	92	1257
South Ribble	109057	545	5	17	3.1	97	528
St Helens	175308	875	30	117	13.4	87	758
Stockport	283275	1,416	47	164	11.6	88	1252
Tameside	219324	1,096	174	584	53.3	47	512
Trafford	226578	1,133	48	164	14.5	86	969
Warrington	202228	1012	5	20	2.0	98	992
West Lancashire	110685	554	30	130	23.5	77	424
Wigan	317849	1,577	273	1,034	65.6	34	543
Wirral	319783	1598	30	114	7.1	93	1484
Wyre	107749	540	5	16	3.0	97	524

Source: Regional Strategic Migration Partnership

Appendix 2 – Numbers of Asylum Seekers accommodated across the North West (Red are widening dispersal authorities)

Local Authority	Cluster limit	Number of dispersed asylum seekers									Change since April 2014	
		17.04.14	18.11.14	06.06.15	10.11.15	25.07.16	13.01.17	03.07.17	02.01.18	01.05.18	No	%
Bolton	1383	846	943	1009	1081	1123	1157	1115	1124	1107	261	30.85%
Bury	925	325	359	421	471	529	527	528	528	518	193	59.38%
Manchester	2515	765	838	907	991	1074	1116	1095	1085	1042	277	36.21%
Oldham	1124	590	667	676	720	749	776	809	854	868	278	47.12%
Rochdale	1058	645	914	1075	1090	1143	1100	1042	1022	1032	387	60.00%
Salford	1169	644	665	690	750	875	885	876	941	920	276	42.86%
Stockport	1416	100	108	124	124	146	141	160	173	164	64	64.00%
Tameside	1096	248	279	308	328	429	454	515	585	584	336	135.48%
Trafford	1132	104	113	107	141	144	164	155	167	164	60	57.69%
Wigan	1589	486	582	659	769	888	962	980	1043	1034	548	112.76%
Blackburn with Darwen	737	312	342	326	346	352	356	349	365	361	49	15.71%
Liverpool	2332	1822	1936	1796	1793	1817	1851	1820	1780	1803	-19	-1.04%
Preston	701		14	127	140	148	186	180	193	194	194	
West Lancashire	553				28	89	116	107	135	130	130	
Lancaster	692					17	102	108	128	131	131	
Burnley	435					28	30	32	47	54	54	
Rosendale	340					34	52	60	80	96	96	
St. Helens	877					73	120	110	121	117	117	
Knowsley	729					16	47	66	103	108	108	
Sefton	1369					13	45	54	77	110	110	
Wirral	1599					25	38	80	111	114	114	
Cheshire West and Chester	1648					14	14	27	51	57	57	
South Ribble	545					8	13	16	17	17	17	
Chorley	536					3	23	25	35	41	41	
Fylde	379					4	4	6	11	11	11	
Hyndburn	404					8	20	16	21	22	22	
Ribble Valley	286						16	18	18	18	18	
Pendle	447						12	16	15	13	13	
Wyre	539						0	12	15	16	16	
Warrington	1011						5	15	19	20	20	
NORTH WEST TOTAL	29566	6887	7760	8225	8772	9749	10332	10392	10864	10866	3979	56.16%

Source: Widening Dispersal Update, Katie Jones Regional Strategic Migration Partnership

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	6
HOUSING SERVICES PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY V.2			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy outlines the Council's policy in relation to the provision of information, advice and action to assist home owners and tenants requiring disabled adaptations, energy efficiency advice and assistance, and other support relating to their home.

This report sets out the scope of services provided by Housing Services under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and highlights the main changes in terms of funding and service development since the previous policy produced in 2009 amended in 2012 and revised in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested:

1. To approve the recommendations stated in this report and the draft Housing Assistance Policy.
2. To continue the flexible use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget during 2018-19. To facilitate the delivery of adaptations which will address Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities more effectively. This will include the removal of the "test of resources" for single adaptations under £6,000 and where two adaptations are required under £10,000.
3. To remove the "test of resources" process from adaptations where equipment requested from an Occupational Therapist and procured by Lancashire County Council are involved.
4. To support the recommendation for the Council to authorise a grant award of up to £20,000 in excess of the DFG mandatory maximum of £30,000, to carry out DFG eligible work as recommended by an Occupational Therapist.
5. That a targeted promotion of DFG's be undertaken through a defined social care capital project with Wyre Council to increase referrals from medical professionals.
6. To undertake capital projects with Registered Providers to improve the housing on offer within the boroughs sheltered housing schemes.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS:

The previous housing policy which incorporated the grant assistance policy was produced in 2009 and amended 2012. Link to previous policy: <http://www.fylde.gov.uk/resident/housing/grants/privatesectorhousingpolicy/>

The existing assistance policy can be found here and was approved at Environmental, Health and Housing committee on the 20th June 2017. [Housing services private sector assistance policy.docx](#)

It was RESOLVED;

1. To approve the flexible use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget during 2017-18 to facilitate the delivery of adaptations which will address Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities more effectively. This will include the removal of the 'test of resources' for adaptations under £6,000;
2. To approve the authorisation of a grant award of up to £10,000 in excess of the DFG mandatory maximum grant of £30,000, to carry out DFG eligible work as recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
3. To review the administration fee which the Council receives for management of DFG works in conjunction with finance officers;
4. To approve a targeted promotion of DFG's be undertaken through partner and third sector agencies to increase referrals;
5. To explore the potential employment on a case-by-case basis of an Occupational Therapist to process the numbers of referrals received by the Council through a targeted promotion of DFG's by our partner, third sector agencies and potentially from county council, and report back to this Committee in due course;
6. To approve the commissioning of additional technical resources on a flexible basis to assist in the increased workload placed on the Housing Services Team to deliver Disabled Facility Grants, to be funded from additional administration fees receivable by the Council;
7. To explore the options to undertake capital projects with the approval of Registered Providers to improve the housing on offer within the boroughs supported housing schemes, and report back to this Committee in due course;
8. To recommend to Council the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant' that will be funded from DFG grant repayments (those being in the event of the sale of a property for which a DFG was previously awarded) to be used to fund grants to qualifying persons in respect of affordable warmth measures, boiler servicing and repairs to vulnerable clients; and
9. To approve a review of the proposed changes and to report back to the Environment, Health and Housing committee in due course.

The new proposed policy can be found here: [Housing services private sector assistance policy v.2.1.docx](#)

The current Home Energy Conservation Act report was approved by committee on the 20th June 2017. A link to that document is here: [Item x- Decision item HECA report 2017.doc](#)

It was RESOLVED to approve the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 further report of March 2017.

Fylde Council's affordable warmth "Green Energy Grant" was approved at Environment, Health and Housing committee on the 10th January 2017 and at the Finance and Democracy Committee on the 23rd January 2017.

It was RESOLVED

1. To approved the affordable warmth scheme as described in the report;
2. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee the approval of a new fully funded capital scheme in the sum of £28,210 in 2016/17 and £28,210 in 2017/18 in relation to the initiative, fully funded by a grant from Lancashire County Council in the same sum; and
3. To authorise the scheme expenditure as detailed in the report subject to approval of the scheme from the Finance and Democracy Committee.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

REPORT

Background

1. The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy outlines Fylde Council's policy in relation to the provision of information, advice and action to assist home owners and tenants requiring adaptations (both major and minor), energy efficiency advice and assistance, and other support relating to their home. The policy is applicable across all tenures however private rented and social housing must also firstly comply with minimum standards as prescribed in the Housing Act 2004.
2. The Council takes the view that the home owners are responsible for maintaining their own properties. However, it is recognised that there are circumstances where some owners will have difficulty meeting their responsibility either through lack of resources, lack of knowledge or lack of support. In such cases the Council will offer appropriate forms of assistance.

Disabled Facility Grants

3. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) provides funding to eligible applicants to help them to make changes in their home environment, such as the installation of wet room showers, stairlifts and ramps, which allow them to live more independently in their homes.
4. DFG also has a key role to play in reducing admission to hospitals, providing safer and more effective discharge from hospital, preventing an increase in demand for social care and delaying or reducing admission to residential care.
5. Difficulties with DFG, particularly in a two tier local government setting, is that it crosses administrative and organisational boundaries. From the customer point of view, this has led to a complicated customer pathway which remains across District/County Council areas. In Lancashire, the situation is further complicated by the fact that Lancashire County Council outsource paediatric OT assessments to Lancashire Care Foundation Trust (LCFT) on an agency basis.
6. Initial customer requests are taken by Social Care teams (County Council), customer assessments are then carried out by Occupational Therapy teams (County Council) and adaptation recommendations are sent to the District Council who then provide casework support, carry out the customer 'Test Of Resources' (to establish eligibility), undertake technical surveys, contractor procurement and monitor quality of work.

Better Care Fund

7. Whilst the complex arrangements described above still exist, the introduction in 2014 of the Better Care Fund (BCF), and the consequent substantial increase in central government funding, has given DFG a much more central position in the policy framework.
8. The BCF is a single pooled budget for health and social care services to work more closely together in local areas, based on a plan agreed between the NHS and Local Authorities.
9. The Better Care Fund Policy Framework 2016/17 confirms that upper tier authorities are required to pass on the DFG funding from the pooled budget to enable housing authorities to continue to meet their mandatory duty. Thus district councils now receive their DFG allocations via the Department of Health (DoH) - delegated to the local Health and Wellbeing Board (LCC)- whereas until 2015 DFG funding was provided directly to Councils by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
10. The 2015 Autumn Spending Review contained a commitment to further raise the DFG budget nationally to £500 Million by 2019/20. In 2014/15 (the final year that the DFG was provided from the DCLG) the Council received £382,794 in DFG funds. In 2015/16 (the first year of the BCF funding arrangements) the Council received £467,963 in 2016/17 the Council received £848,621 in 2017/18 £929,565 and lately £1,010,510 for 2018/19.
11. The additional funding brings with it additional expectations in terms of how the Council is expected to play its part in addressing new conditions set out in the Better Care Fund Policy Framework, which are:
 - Reducing delayed transfers of care
 - Minimising avoidable hospital admissions and
 - Facilitating early discharge

12. Whilst the Better Care Fund Policy Framework does not set specific targets for use of DFG, district councils should be mindful of the BCF objectives which include several which are relevant to DFG services, such as reductions in the number of admissions to residential and care homes, reductions in delayed transfers of care and improvements in the patient/service user experience.
13. Similarly, the NHS 5 Year Forward View noted that a key condition for transformation across local health economies is a strong primary and out-of-hospital care system, with well-developed planning about how to provide care in people's own homes, with a focus on prevention, promoting independence and support to stay well. Home adaptations play a prominent role in meeting this condition.

Proposals to optimise the use of the Council's DFG allocation

14. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (hereafter abbreviated to the RRO) removed most of the prescriptive housing renewal grant legislation in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and Article 3 of the RRO introduced wide ranging discretionary powers to develop different forms of assistance to meet local needs.
15. The government issued accompanying guidance about the use of RRO in 2003. The RRO is not new legislation, but to date the opportunity for the Council to consider more flexible use of DFG funds has been constrained by limited financial resources. However, the Council is now experiencing unprecedented high levels of DFG funding and therefore has the opportunity to continue a flexible use of its DFG budget to meet local needs.
16. If the Council is to achieve a faster, leaner service to speed up hospital discharge and to reduce pressures on health and care services, a more agile approach to its DFG provision needs to be continued and expanded.
17. Districts across Lancashire are now using the RRO to adopt more flexible approaches to the provision of adaptations, partly as a way of dealing with the problem of customers failing the DFG test of resources and partly as a general method of streamlining the process of applying for and obtaining an adaptation. Fylde Council now has an opportunity to use these DFG resources more effectively. It is important to minimise the prospect of failing to utilise these resources and avoid the possibility of unused funds being clawed back by LCC for re-allocation elsewhere. Although LCC has not yet indicated a definitive intention to 'claw back' any unused DFG funds at year-end, it would be prudent for the Council to take action to reduce the prospect of this eventuality.
18. Therefore a number of policy changes are recommended to take effect with the amendment of the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. The recommendations are predicated on an expectation that the current levels of funding for DFG are to be maintained and therefore are subject to review if funding levels change in the future.

Recommendation 1: Removal of means test for certain types of adaptations (under £6,000) for single adaptations and £10,000 for two adaptations across all tenures (for 2018/19):

19. To qualify for the non-means tested approach, it is recommended that the required adaptation work would consist of the following from the list below and that the total cost of adaptation would be under £6,000 for one or £10,000 where two adaptations are required. (not including any fee that the council would include). Adaptations below £6,000 are currently not means tested as agreed in the previous assistance policy of 2017.
 - Bathroom conversion (i.e. removal of bath and installation of Level Access Shower/Wet Room)
 - Door widening to allow wheel chair access
 - Providing access to properties such as low threshold doors and access to gardens
 - Hospital release cases identified by Health Professionals
 - Ramps to aid access to the property (over £1,000)
20. It is also recommended that within this policy the Council should continue to reserve the right, in exceptional circumstances, to consider a more flexible approach by offering customers other adaptation items that are not usually available under DFG. Such works would include the provision of safe rooms for children or adults with behavioural/mental health disabilities.
21. Clearly there are risks to the loosening of eligibility criteria. However, this would be mitigated by the fact that an occupational therapy referral would still be required in accessing an adaptation. The Council would still be confident that customers being referred for an adaptation would need them. Similarly, by loosening the

eligibility criteria there will be some customers who will receive an adaptation free of charge when they could afford to fund the work themselves.

22. However, in terms of addressing the prevention and early intervention agenda, if the Council facilitates the provision of adaptations to a household who would have been less inclined to self-fund, it would still have contributed to the prevention of potential falls in the home and thus helped to prevent lengthy and costly hospital stays.
23. Adaptations provided without carrying out a test of resources would not be classified as a DFG because the full DFG application process would not have been activated. Instead, such adaptations would need to be distinguished from DFG and be known by another title. The recommended suggestion is the "Adaptations Grant."
24. The relaxation of means test regulations allows the Council to address the BCF agenda more effectively, it also provides a better opportunity to maximise the DFG budget that the Council receives from BCF and increase processing times for delivery of the service.
25. Cases that are initially started under this type of grant but due to unforeseen works move above the £6-10,000 threshold would be reviewed by the Housing Services Manager and either allowed or moved to a standard DFG process. Such factors would include consideration over the possible extended time delays completing the works or the total financial amount that any additional works involve. It is recommended that a 10% variance on the maximum would be allowed but only with permission of the Housing Services Manager.

Recommendation 2: Removal of the "test of resources" for the installation of equipment recommended by an Occupational Therapist and procured by LCC.

26. Procurement, supply and installation of equipment is currently undertaken by Lancashire County Council. This is an agreed policy which is in place across Lancashire and allows County to negotiate better prices for the purchase of equipment from suppliers and speed up the installation process. The district authorities supply the funding through the Better Care Fund framework.
27. It is recommended that the "test of resources" for the supply of equipment is removed to further aid the speed at which this is installed. Often equipment is provided in addition to adaptations which are installed by the Council and it is recommended that this policy change will work in parallel to recommendation 1.

Equipment will include the following:

- Stairlifts
- Through floor lifts (for wheel chair use)
- Ceiling tracking
- Wash Dry toilets

Recommendation 3: Introduce provisions to allow additional funds above the DFG maximum (subject to budget availability)

28. The mandatory DFG maximum grant is £30,000. This upper limit has been in place since 2008. Previous housing services policies have allowed spend above this amount if finances have been available. In recent years the Council has handled a small number of complex adaptation cases where the tendered cost of works have exceeded the mandatory DFG maximum of £30,000. Additional funds for adaptations above the mandatory DFG limits are sometimes referred to as "Discretionary DFG". This term may give the misleading impression that the recommended works are discretionary. This is not the intention.
29. It is recommended that the Council permits the award of a supplementary grant, in cases where the list of works recommended by the OT has been market tested and exceeds £30,000, in order to enable all the recommended mandatory works to be undertaken. The funding for such works to be taken from the DFG allocation provided as part of the BCF.
30. As a caveat to ensure that the Council retains financial control of its resources, it is further recommended that the policy should clearly state that this facility would be subject to budget availability and that such additional grant should not exceed £20,000. This would require the Housing Services Manager to approve such grants.

The facility to be able to call upon up to an additional £20,000 would help to prevent time consuming delays in such cases, which otherwise would stall while other funding solutions were explored.

Recommendation 4: Targeted promotion of Disabled Facility Grants through a social care capital project.

31. Due to the increased levels of funding provided by the BCF and the removal of the Councils “holding list” of applicants it is now necessary for the Council to increase the level of referrals for adaptations in order to maximise the use of our BCF allocation. Rather than a “public advertisement” of the service it is recommended that a targeted promotion of the service to health professionals such as hospital nurses and General Practitioners (GP’s) be employed. This will ensure that the applicants have undertaken some form of prior assessment of need/disability assessment and that the Council are not inundated with unsuitable applications. This would be a joint pilot project in conjunction with Wyre Council and coordinated by Wyre and Fylde Care and Repair service. Funding this scheme would be joint between Fylde and Wyre Council and provision is made within the BCF that DFG funding can be allocated for such a “social care capital” project. Provisional discussions are already taking place with Wyre Council and the NHS for the launch of this scheme in 2018. In addition Wyre Council have sourced an additional £42,900 which will be provided to the project. Due to the annual nature of the BCF funding this scheme is proposed to the end of the financial year 2018/19 and for review at that time.

Recommendation 5: Undertake a capital project with a registered provider to increase the numbers of adapted sheltered/temporary housing properties to improve the local housing offer.

32. The flexibility within the DFG budget allows the Council to undertake certain capital projects which will meet the BCF priorities and local needs. The Council has made contact with our main registered provider to investigate the possibility of a capital project to convert suitable sheltered flats for disabled use. This would be through the supply of stairlifts to certain sheltered properties. Access to these flats would be through the ‘My Home Choice’ route and therefore be available to those in greatest need of adapted facilities.

33. This capital project would also include work to adapt flats used as temporary accommodation by the Council which are owned by our main registered provider.

Other assistance covered by the policy

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) <http://www.chil.uk.com/>

34. This pan-Lancashire Energy Efficiency Pilot Project, under the banner of CHiL, operated from September 2015 to September 2016. Its primary aim was to test the ‘business model’ of installing energy efficiency and heating improvements in domestic properties through Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, and to achieve as many installs as possible into the homes of Lancashire residents, especially those in fuel poverty and/or with cold-related health issues.

35. During summer 2015 Blackburn with Darwen Council, acting on behalf of all the Councils in Lancashire, was successful in a £2,200,000 bid to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) for grant funding for first-time central heating systems. This project was delivered under the CHiL brand. The scheme did not officially launch until June 2016 and ended in April 2017 with over 670 installations conducted. The CHiL brand will be retained as an ‘umbrella’ for other Lancashire-wide energy efficiency projects or funding bids which may be submitted in the future.

36. In 2018 CHiL secured a further £1,000,000 to continue to undertake central heating installation through the Warms Home Fund. This was a joint bid between all Lancashire authorities and Sefton Council. Fylde Council continue to be members of the CHiL operations group and assist with funding bids as they become available.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Green Energy Affordable Warmth Grant

37. In September 2016 Lancashire County Council agreed to provide a total of £1M allocated equally in £500,000 tranches across 2016/17 and 2017/18 to District Councils to enable them to direct funding towards alleviating fuel poverty amongst the most vulnerable groups.

38. The funding distribution to the districts is based on the relative levels of fuel poverty across Lancashire. Under this formula, the Council received a total of £28,210 for use in 2016/17 and a further £25,479.50 in 2017/18. The funding was reduced in year two due to lowering levels of fuel poverty in Fylde. The funding can assist with the following activities, which have been approved by LCC:

Boiler servicing
 Boiler replacements
 Heating repairs and servicing
 Cavity wall insulation
 Loft insulation
 Double glazing (replacing single glazed) in habitable rooms only

39. Funding for this project has been supplemented over 2017/18 by the Housing Needs Grant however County have now requested that the funding be fully allocated in 2018/19 as such the Council will now use a combination of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding and the Green Energy grant only to fund measures. Once the LCC funding is fully committed the Council can use funding from the Housing Needs Grant and ECO funding to continue to supply measures to vulnerable residents using the criteria for assistance already in place.

Housing Needs Grants

40. In 2017/18 the Housing Needs Grants have provided part funding to the measures undertaken from the LCC Green Energy Grants in addition to funding sourced from ECO. The Housing Need Grant is sourced from DFG repayments and to date £7,618.50 of this fund has been committed to assist in the installation of 29 measures typically boiler replacements. The use of this fund has allowed the Green Energy Grant to assist more residents at a reduced cost.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	<p>Finance for the delivery of the Disabled Facility Grant is externally funded from the Better Care Fund and our primary registered provider Progress Housing Group.</p> <p>Further removal of the ‘test of resources’ for certain adaptations will result in an increase of funds the council receives from acting on behalf of applicants. An increase in the maximum DFG awarded to £50,000 will increase the level of income the Council receive for these adaptations under the grant agency fee.</p> <p>The social care capital project joint with Wyre Council will result in an increase in the number of applications and therefore increase the level of funding the council receives from the grant agency fee.</p> <p>Finance for capital measures under the Affordable warmth scheme is funded by Lancashire County Council (LCC).</p> <p>Finance for capital measures using the housing needs grant is funded from DFG grant repayments and therefore at no cost to the Council apart from officer time.</p>
Legal	<p>It is a legal requirement for the Council to undertake Disabled Facility Grants. It is a legal requirement to comply with the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA 1995) and account is to be taken of guidance issued by central government.</p>
Community Safety	None directly from this report.
Human Rights and Equalities	The failure or delays to the process of Disabled Facility Grants may affect an applicant’s human rights or highlight equality issues in relation to disabled applicants.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	Improvements in energy efficiency through the Affordable Warmth Project will have a beneficial impact on the environment and will contribute positively to sustainability. This will also contribute to lower CO2 emissions.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None directly from this report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Home Energy Conservation Act further report 2013	6/2013	Decision report produced 2013
Home Energy Conservation Act further report 2015	12/3/2015	Decision report produced 2015
Affordable Warmth scheme	10/1/2017	Decision report produced 2017
Housing Services Assistance Policy	June 2017	Decision report produced in 2017
Home Adaptations for Disabled People: A good practice guide"	2013	http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/DFG-Good-Practice-Guide-30th-Sept-131.pdf
The Disabled Facility Grant before and after the introduction of the Better Care Fund	2016	http://www-foundations.uk.com/media/4665/dfg-report-final-interactive-converted-draft-6-small.pdf
Better Care Fund technical guidance	2016/2017	https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/transformation-fund/bcf-plan/
The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002	2002	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1860/contents/made
Green Energy Fund: Strand 3, Supporting Domestic Energy Reduction	13/9/2016	http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9208
NHS 5 year Forward View	10/2014	https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/

Attached Documents

Appendix 1 - Housing Services Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

Housing Services
Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

V.2

Introduction

This policy document outlines Fylde Borough Council's policy in relation to the provision of information, advice and enabling activities to assist home owners and tenants requiring adaptations, energy efficiency measures and other support relating to their home. This policy is intended to replace and update elements of the existing housing policy relating to grant assistance from 2017.

The policy will become effective from the 1st July 2018 following approval at the Environment, Health and Housing Committee on the 5th June 2018.

The policy will continue to be reviewed as circumstances and finances dictate. Factors that may prompt a review of the policy could include:

- Changes to capital spending plans
- Acute changes to local circumstances (including increase in demand)
- Change in national or regional policy
- Legislative changes

Fylde Council (the Council) takes the view that the prime responsibility for maintaining and improving housing rests with home owners and landlords. However, the Council is committed to improving the quality of housing across all tenures, including owner occupation and private renting. In addition, it is acknowledged that there are some vulnerable homeowners who will need support to enable them to access relevant available assistance to keep their home to a decent standard.

Policy Aims

- This policy is to update the previous private sector assistance policy produced in 2017 in relation to grant assistance.
- To provide advice, information and support on repair, maintenance and adaptation of properties.
- To offer a framework of assistance to vulnerable groups/households.
- To comply with the legal requirements placed on the Council under the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995.
- To facilitate an increase in the number of households able to heat their homes at reasonable cost thereby reducing fuel poverty and helping households to achieve affordable warmth.
- To reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the borough's private housing stock.
- To help to improve the physical conditions of both homes and neighbourhoods.
- To assist disabled people with adaptations to facilitate their movement in and around their home, thereby improving their quality of life.
- To contribute to the aims of the Better Care Fund, principally to reduce delayed transfers of care, minimise avoidable hospital admission and facilitate early discharge from hospital.

- In offering assistance the Council is seeking to enable people to help themselves and advise customers of services offered by other organisations.
- To treat individuals fairly regardless of age, sex, gender, disability and sexual orientation and to protect their rights under data protection and human rights legislation.

Corporate Objectives

The housing assistance policy works towards meeting Fylde Council's priorities in relation to the following corporate objectives set in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020.

Clean and green

- The provision of grant assistance and advice to reduce levels of co2, improve home insulation and improve the efficiency of and replace old defective heating systems, contributes towards providing a clean and green environment.

Great place to live

- The provision of Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's) assists residents to live independently in their own homes.
- Adaptations reduce non elective admissions to hospital and improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their carer's.
- The DFG service is improving the housing stock in Fylde by increasing the number of adapted properties suitable for a range of needs.
- To ensure that Fylde properties remain below the England and North West averages for fuel poverty.
- Our Affordable Warmth Grant working in relation with Lancashire County Council and projects undertaken in connection with the Lancashire Energy Officers Group aim to reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty.

Value for money

- The Housing Services Section has undergone a time lean process in order to improve delivery of our disabled facility service.
- Through this and several other processes the Council has reduced its holding list for adaptations from 80 in 2015 to 0 in 2018.
- Fylde Council now benchmarks the service with several other local authorities to ensure value for money and an efficient service.
- In 2017/18 the Council were able to process 37% more adaptations than in the previous year.

Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs)

Under Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 the Council has a legal duty to provide specialist adaptations to meet the care and mobility needs of people with disabilities to enable them to live independently with privacy and dignity.

The need for the adaptation is determined by an Occupational Therapist from the Lancashire County Council's Adult Social Care Services Department.

Fylde Council is the lower tier authority responsible for statutory housing functions, whilst Lancashire County Council (LCC) is the upper tier responsible for social care.

DFGs for Tenants of Registered Social Housing Providers

In legal terms the ultimate responsibility for funding adaptations lies with the Council. However, registered providers also have a duty to their tenants to provide a home which is accessible and safe.

The Homes and Communities Agency's Regulatory Framework ('Home Standard') states:

"Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets tenants' needs"

(the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419208/Home_Standard_2015.pdf

As such Fylde Council work in partnership with our registered providers to provide a suitable housing offer for the needs of residents in the borough.

All households who are resident in 'Intermediate home ownership' housing i.e. those living in Shared Ownership, properties purchased with an equity loan and discounted for sale properties are classed as 'private' owner occupiers for the purpose of DFG applications.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) Financial Threshold

Where an adaptation will cost under £1,000 and the property is privately rented or owned, the County Council will arrange for the works to be completed as a minor adaptation. This is a legal requirement of Social Services to undertake adaptation work under £1,000.

Prioritisation of DFG Applications

Fylde has now adopted the Lancashire criteria for prioritisation of DFG applications. This criteria has been worked on and agreed between all district authorities in Lancashire as well as LCC in order to remove a "postcode lottery" in relation to prioritisation. Applications are classified as either P1 requiring urgent attention or P2 non urgent. An applicant's needs are assessed monthly at the Priority Panel which consists of representatives from the district council, LCC and registered providers. The panel is also an avenue for one to one conversations with relevant organisations and allows for effective partnership working.

The Lancashire criteria is as follows. Regardless of priority all cases will be dealt with by the council.

1. URGENT (P1)

The applicant has an urgent need for an adaptation such as :

1. To facilitate hospital discharge/prevention of hospital re-admission
2. Under the recommendation of the Occupational Therapist acting on behalf of the Social Services.
3. Provision of independent or safe access to essential facilities and to the property without which there would be a potential breakdown of the current situation.
4. Service user and/or carer at high risk of physical injury needing alternative care arrangements until/unless work is completed

2. NON URGENT (P2)

The applicant has a need for a DFG however the need is not an urgent priority such as :

1. Under the recommendation of the Occupational Therapist acting on behalf of the social services authority.
2. Works which prevent long term admission to residential care
3. Improve the service user's long term ability to remain at home

Within the system there is flexibility for applicants with unusual circumstances to be given priority however it would be expected that such circumstances are provided with supporting evidence from various medical/health professionals.

There is a strong emphasis on the OT recommendation to determine prioritisation as they are the best placed professional to assess the client and their needs from a medical perspective.

Fylde will contact all clients to notify them of their priority based on this system.

Eligibility

A customer who is a disabled person as described by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 is eligible for assistance.

The duty is 'tenure blind', thus adaptations should be provided for those in need, irrespective of the type of home that they live in.

In addition,

- Applicants must be over 18.
- Parents or guardians may apply on behalf of children.
- Landlords may apply on behalf of tenants.
- The property must be a legal residence which includes dwellings, mobile homes, caravans and houseboats.
- Works must be "reasonable and practicable" to carry out, as determined by a designated Council officer in consultation with an OT and the applicant.

DFG Grant Conditions

All applications are dealt with in accordance with the priority awarded them (see above) and in date order (received from LCC). All applications are subject to a test of financial resources in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) to determine the amount, if any, to be contributed by the applicant towards the cost of the work.

In accordance with legislation the test of financial resources will not be applied in cases where an application is being made on behalf of a child or young person (within the context of the legislation).

From April 2018 and in consultation with Fylde Council's finance section the Council increased its administration fee for approved grants in 2018/19 from 10% to 15%.

Eligible Works (specified by an OT assessment)

- To assist entry and exit from the property.
- To aid access into and around the living areas, bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms.
- To improve or provide heating and/or light controls.
- To make the dwelling safe for the disabled occupant and other people residing with him/her.
- Access to and from the garden by a disabled occupant.
- Where the existing footprint or layout of the dwelling, including outbuildings and garages, can be adapted or converted to accommodate the facilities required the Council will not consider any extension to the property.
- Where an extension is necessary and there is no other option, the Council will consider the most cost effective method of meeting the applicant's requirements.

- Where the applicant has a preference for works that are over and above those necessary to meet the disabled person's needs (such as an extension rather than the provision of stair lift and level access shower) the Council will only fund the cost of the original recommended works, with the remainder being funded by the applicant.
- Applications for grants where works have started but have not been completed will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate exceptional circumstances as to why they did not apply and seek approval prior to the start of the work. In such cases any work already completed will be excluded from the subsequent application.

Service Standards

- Legislation requires a decision from the Council to approve the grant (or not) within 6 months of receiving the full application (this includes all necessary information e.g. proof of home ownership or landlord consent);
Fylde Council will aim to achieve this within 8 weeks or less.
- In accordance with legislation, the Council will aim to complete the installation of all disabled adaptations within 12 months from the date of grant approval.
Fylde Council will aim to achieve this within 15 weeks or less.
- Delays in the process are often associated with factors which are external to the Council for example, obtaining owners consents, asbestos surveys, delays in the ordering, construction and supply of equipment or delays in receiving invoices from contractors or partner agencies. The reasons for any delays beyond the time periods which the Council aim to achieve will be monitored and recorded.
- The Council aims to process applications fairly, efficiently, courteously and promptly.
- The Council aims to pay grant money due within 30 days of a valid claim on certified work.

Legal Charges and repayments

In accordance with the legislation set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, where the adaptation is carried out to a property which is privately owned and the cost of the work is £5,000, or more, the Council will place a legal charge on the property through the Land Registry.

The legal charge will last for ten years. If the property is sold or otherwise changes ownership within ten years of the completion date, the Council will require repayment of the grant. The maximum repayable amount at the change of ownership is £10,000.

The following is the criteria set in the above legislation to determine grant repayments:

- The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he or she be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;
- Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity,

Decisions in relation to grant repayments are made at the discretion of the Principal Housing Services Officer based on the above criteria.

The DFG application process: considering alternative options

During the period that the Council is considering the application a number of options will be explored with the applicant which include:

- Possibly moving to a property owned by a registered provider or a private sector property.
- If the customer is a Registered Provider tenant, the Council will liaise with the Registered Providers to determine whether it is more cost effective for the applicant to transfer to another property rather than adapt the existing property. This is discussed at the Priority Panel when necessary.
- Exploring options to assist the applicant in funding any contribution required by them in the form of third sector assistance.

Contractors

The applicant for a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) can instruct any contractor to obtain quotes and undertake works in relation to a DFG. However the Council has a list of contractors who have a history of successfully undertaking work to adapt properties which an applicant can use as part of the agreement. Please note this is not an approved list of council contractors and the contract for undertaking works remains between the applicant and the contractor.

Two quotes are usually obtained in relation to undertaking DFG work. The cheaper of the two will be awarded the works if the quote covers all the required elements of the adaptation. To minimise disruption and to ensure the works are conducted as quickly as possible for the applicant it is not usual for us to instruct more than 2 contractors to quote for works.

One quote will be deemed as acceptable for works where the situation permits (for example where the works are required urgently, to minimise disruption to clients who are vulnerable or where the works are conducted within the social housing sector (see below). Where one contractor quotes for the works the reasons will be specified and agreed by the Housing Services Manager. The price of the quote will be scrutinised to ensure it is reasonable for the proposed works.

In some circumstances the client will wish to use their preferred contractor. In these cases the Council will check the quote which is returned to ensure it is reasonable based on similar works which have been undertaken previously. If the client insists on the use of only one contractor and the quote is above what the Council would reasonably expect for the works proposed the Council will only pay what is deemed as reasonable and the client will be required to pay the difference.

All quotes are checked to ensure they are reasonable by the Senior Housing Technical Officer, Principal Housing Services Officer and Housing Services Manager as part of the grants approval process. If the quote is above what would be expected for such works then the Senior Technical Officer would go back to the contractor to obtain further details about the reasons for this.

The exception to the above process is the procurement and supply of equipment. Stair lifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, specialist equipment for bathing and ceiling track hoists form part of a procurement partnership with LCC, who also arrange installation. This process occurs across Lancashire and allows fixed low cost prices of equipment due to economies of scale of bulk ordering. Adaptations of this type only require one quote for the reasons stated above.

However Fylde Council will continue to arrange for the purchase and installation of wash/dry toilets in order to improve delivery times. Included within the grant sum paid for such items of equipment is an extended warranty which gives the customer reassurance in the event of maintenance issues or breakdown of the item. Once the warranty period has expired, the customer assumes the responsibility for maintaining the item(s) of equipment.

Progress Housing Group are the largest provider of social housing in Fylde. Progress Group have undertaken their own procurement of contractors in relation to DFG adaptations. As such only contractors which are approved with the registered provider are permitted to undertake work on these properties.

Contractor checks

Any contractor who undertakes work as part of a DFG will be required to provide sufficient documentation to satisfy the Council that the works will be conducted in a safe and timely fashion and that sufficient insurance is in place (see below).

What Fylde Council require for a NEW contractor

- Signed declaration to adhere to agreed working practices including legislative requirements.
- Copy of current Public Liability Insurance
- Copy of current Employers Liability Insurance
- Copy of current all risks/contract works insurance (for larger extensions only)

What Fylde Council require annually from EXISTING contractors

That the above documents are sent to us annually including an updated declaration which may be amended year on year depending on legislative and procedural changes.

Maximum DFG entitlement

The mandatory maximum that an applicant can be awarded (per application) under the DFG legislation is £30,000.

For 2018/19 the Council is trialing the provision of additional funds (subject to budget availability) of up to a further £20,000 being available to enable all the mandatory DFG-eligible works, as recommended by the Occupational Therapist, to be carried out.

This policy change has been introduced in recognition of the fact that extremely complex adaptation cases, mainly for children, involving extensions plus specialist equipment, are now resulting in quotes which exceed to statutory maximum grant of £30,000.

This facility to draw upon an additional sum of money will enable customers to receive their adaptations without progress being delayed while alternative funding solutions are explored.

Fylde Council have the discretion to increase the upper limit for DFG's if it is stated in the Housing Assistance Policy. This funding will be supplied from the Better Care Fund grant received by the Council in relation to Disabled Facility Grants and is therefore subject to annual review.

Better Care Fund

From 2015/16 the grant paid from Central Government to Local Housing Authorities to help pay for DFGs has been a named part of the Department of Health's 'Better Care Fund'.

The Better Care Fund is described as a '*single pooled budget for health & social care services to work more closely together in local areas based on a plan agreed between the NHS & local authorities*'.

The Better Care Fund 2016/17 Policy Framework refers to the Better Care Fund as '*the biggest ever financial incentive for the integration of health and social care...it requires Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities to pool budgets and to agree an integrated spending plan for how they will use their Better Care Fund allocation*'.

The Better Care Fund 2016/17 Technical

Guidance: <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5572443/Better+Care+Fund+Planning+Requirements+for+2016-17+Technical+Guidance+Annex+4/95d68c2e-8e5f-4ff0-9d5b-0478cd79d118>

Confirms that '*the statutory duty on local housing authorities to provide DFG to those who qualify for it will remain. Therefore each area will have to allocate this funding to its respective housing authorities (district councils in two-tier areas) from the pooled budget to enable them to continue to meet their statutory duty to provide adaptations to the homes of disabled people, including in relation to young people*'.

In Lancashire the custodian of the Better Care Fund is the Health and Wellbeing

Board <http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=6715&pageid=40271&e=e>

The Council intends to use the funding that it receives via the Better Care Fund to help to address the stated Better Care Fund priorities, namely:

- **Reducing delayed transfers of care**
- **Minimising avoidable hospital admissions**
- **Facilitating early discharge from hospital**

Adaptations grant

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 ("the RRO") removed most of the prescriptive housing renewal grant legislation contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Article 3 of the RRO introduced wide ranging discretionary powers to allow Councils to develop different forms of assistance to meet local needs.

The Council intends to continue to make use of the RRO provisions to enable it to use funds received from the Better Care Fund more flexibly, responsively and effectively.

From July 2018, and subject to available funding, the Council intends to remove the financial assessment for certain types of adaptation requests submitted by the Occupational Therapy service.

To qualify for the non-means tested route to obtaining an adaptation:

- For a single adaptation if the works cost under £6,000
- For two adaptations if the combined works cost under £10,000
- That supply and installation of equipment (which is procured and supplied externally to the Council) is removed from the means testing process.

This would not include any fee which the Council would charge for undertaking and arranging the works. It is important to note that these grants would **not** be classified as a Disabled Facility Grant.

If the recommended works are above the maximum amounts stated above the application will follow the standard DFG route.

The Council also reserve the right, in exceptional circumstances, to consider a more flexible approach by offering customers other adaptation items that are not available under DFG such as the provision of safe rooms for children or adults with behavioral disabilities.

There are a number of reasons for the Council introducing an alternative approach to its adaptation service:

- The Council's wish to make best use of the financial resources received from the Better Care Fund.
- The Council's wish to streamline the adaptation service for the benefit of customers.
- The need to address the 'prevention and early intervention' agenda.
- To enable the Council to provide assistance to customers who already have or who would fail the DFG financial assessment, but who still have a need determined by a Health Care Professional for an adaptation.

The Council intend to operate the “Adaptation Grant” using some of the same features that are used in processing DFG applications, namely:

- The recommended work must be ‘reasonable and practical’ using the DFG definition.
- The work would still require landlord’s permission where the applicant rents from a private or social landlord.
- A 15% agency fee, payable to the Council, would be included in the cost of the grant award.
- The applicant would be eligible to apply for a DFG in the future should their needs change and an Occupational Therapist referral confirms this.
- Repayments would be required for any amount over £5,000 within 10 years of the certified date of completion if the property is sold.

However, the applicant would not be prevented from making a full DFG application if they preferred to do so. Under the RRO the Council is not permitted to deny an applicant the right to make a full DFG application, although in practice such a scenario would be unlikely.

Energy Efficiency

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 requires Councils to improve the energy efficiency of homes in their area, i.e. to reduce energy usage and carbon dioxide emissions within the housing stock.

The Council meets its HECA requirements through a variety of projects and funding bids which it undertakes in conjunction with the Lancashire Energy Officers Group.

Since March 2013, HECA has required the Council to publish a biennial progress report setting out measures the Council considers practical and cost effective in improving the energy efficiency in the borough.

A link to the full 2017-2019 HECA report is here:

<http://www.fylde.gov.uk/resident/housing/housingstrategy/>

‘Fuel Poverty’ is currently defined in England (under the ‘Low Income, High Costs’ definition) as a household whose income is below the poverty line (when energy costs are taken into account) and whose energy costs are also higher than the median for their household type.

Recent examples include the successful bids for funding include :

- Affordable Warmth Funding via Lancashire County Council of £53,689.50 over two years.
- Central heating fund of £2,200,000 for installation of first time central heating under the Cosy Homes in Lancashire initiative (CHIL) across County.
- Warm Home Fund of £1,000,000 for installation of first time central heating under the CHIL umbrella across County.

Information in relation to the Council’s energy efficiency grant service can be found here:

<http://www.fylde.gov.uk/resident/housing/grants/>

Home Improvement Agency (Care and Repair, Wyre & Fylde)

The Home Improvement Agency for Fylde is delivered by Care and Repair (Wyre & Fylde). This is a long standing agreement which Fylde Council contribute £30,000 of funding per year.

The Care and Repair Service is administered from Wyre Council on behalf of the two authorities. Care and Repair (Wyre and Fylde) provide advice and support. Examples of services provided include: installation of grab rails, supporting client to access charity funding to carry out essential works, visiting clients in their own home to assess needs, provide support to complete claims for Attendance Allowance and making referrals for the Affordable Warmth Initiative.

The provision of a Handy Person scheme for small scale repairs such as security measures, draught proofing, tripping hazards and falls prevention.

The Minor Adaptation service is a statutory function of LCC which provides housing related support to disabled individuals. Minor Adaptations customers are not subject to a financial assessment. If customers have medical needs – as confirmed by an OT assessment – which can be met by the provision of Minor Adaptations costing less than £1000 (typically banister rails, external metal rails and adjustments to steps) LCC send these cases direct to Care and Repair who arrange for the works to be carried out.

Fylde Coast private landlords forum

The Council recognises the important role of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) within the overall housing offer in Fylde.

The Council seeks to maintain an effective dialogue with private landlords and lettings agents. To this end the Council are members of the Fylde Coast Landlords forum. This is a long established group of landlords across the Fylde coast which includes landlords from Wyre and Blackpool.

The landlords forum set their own agenda and Fylde Council are available for comments or information as required.

Any private landlord or lettings agent who own or manage privately rented accommodation in Fylde are welcome to attend the Landlord Forum meetings.

<http://www.fyldecoastlandlordsforum.co.uk/>

Complaints or Comments

In the event of dissatisfaction with the service being provided the enquirer/applicant should first raise the matter with the member of staff dealing with the case. Given the opportunity to do so most issues should be resolved by the member of staff concerned.

In the event of the matter not being resolved the Council has a formal complaints procedure which can be accessed here.

<http://www.fylde.gov.uk/business/customer-services/complain/>

Or in writing to the Housing Services Manager, Fylde Council, Town Hall, St. Anne's on sea, FY8 1LW.

The housing service routinely asks for comments through its customer satisfaction survey and applicants are encouraged to return questionnaires.

The Council also welcomes comments at any time about its services.

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	7

MY HOME CHOICE FYLDE COAST REVISED CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT POLICY

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

MyHomeChoice is the Choice Based lettings (CBL) system across the Fylde Coast authorities of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It provide a portal where all vacancies for social housing are advertised in one place and households can placed bids for this accommodation. Properties are then allocated using a Consistent Assessment Policy for prioritising the housing need of applicants.

A review was undertaken of MyHomeChoice in 2015/16 which focussed on addressing issues of concern with the current Consistent Assessment Policy (CAP) raised by Registered Providers. The last such review of the Choice Based lettings Scheme (CBL) was undertaken in 2013, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. A number of changes were proposed to the current Consistent Assessment Policy to help alleviate delays in the current system for applicants, by bringing in an element of flexibility in ways households can access affordable housing.

The proposed changes have undergone a consultation period. As part of the consultation process Fylde BC Environment, Health and Housing committee were updated on the 7th November 2017 on the proposed changes and it was recommended a working group be established to submit a consultation response and review the findings of the wider consultation exercise, in order for further consideration and approval of the proposed changes by this committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note the contents of the report on the review of MyHomeChoice CAP, the information provided to the Working Group and the outcome of the consultation process regarding proposed changes to the CAP.
2. Approve the proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy and recommend the policy be updated and implemented by Fylde Coast Housing Providers.
3. A further update on the working of the Consistent Assessment Policy of MHC within Fylde be provided to this committee in 1 years' time that refreshes information provided in Appendices 1, 3, 4 and 5.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Cabinet - 18th November 2009

1. To commit to the detailed development of the CBL scheme based on the principles outlined in this report.
2. To approve the apportionment of costs, with FBC's costs to be funded by virement from within existing budgetary provision
3. To support consultation on the adoption of a new allocation scheme for Fylde borough that will comprise a borough-specific lettings plan and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

4. To ensure that the final CBL system and associated allocation scheme is presented to a future meeting of Cabinet for approval prior to its introduction.

Cabinet - 16th February 2011

1. To recommend approval of a new Allocation Scheme for the Council which will set out who will get priority in the letting of affordable housing in the Borough. The Allocation Scheme to comprise a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy.
2. To recommend approval of the process to establish a Partnership Agreement that sets out the responsibilities of the nine partners in establishing and operating a proposed new Fylde Coast CBL system.
3. To recommend that project costs should be approved and that the council should enter into a contract with an IT provider for the new CBL system that will be operated by the principal social housing providers across Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre.

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee in 2013 considered changes as a result of the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 and consultation responses as follows:

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee - 10th January 2013

1. To note the review of the allocation policy and to welcome the report of the consultation responses to a future meeting
2. To recommend that the Council approves the draft Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy
3. To note the new power in the Localism Act 2011 that enables Local Authorities to discharge their homelessness duty using the private rented sector

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee - 23rd May 2013

1. The consultation results be noted
2. To recommend that Cabinet adopt the draft Housing Allocation Policy
3. To recommend that Cabinet approve the Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy

Cabinet - 26th June 2013

Resolved to approve the recommendations made by the Policy Scrutiny Committee 23rd May 2013.

1. The consultation results be noted
2. To recommend that Cabinet adopt the draft Housing Allocation Policy
3. To recommend that Cabinet approve the Fylde Coast Tenancy Strategy

Environmental Health and Housing – 7th November 2017

The committee RESOLVED to

1. Note the contents of the report on the consultation related to proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy (Allocations Policy) for MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast;
2. That the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, and Councillor Oades, establish a working group with the Housing services Manager to submit a formal consultation;
3. That all councillors are requested to provide responses to the consultation by the end of November 2017, should they wish prior to the working groups, and;
4. The Fylde Coast Housing Providers group consider all responses received from across the Fylde Coast and provide a revised Consistent Assessment Policy for MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast for further consideration and approval by committee.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

1. A review was undertaken of MyHomeChoice in 2015/16 which focussed on addressing issues of concern with the current Consistent Assessment Policy (CAP) raised by Registered Providers;

(A doc link is available to the current CAP in Background Documents)

- a. The system needs to enable Providers to find tenants for properties promptly and avoid unacceptably high re-let times
 - b. It was felt the system needs to have a more flexible commercial approach to attract more households who would not necessarily have thought they would be eligible for social housing
 - c. Concerns regarding difficult to let properties exacerbated by the introduction of the Spare Room Subsidy for Housing Benefit purposes
 - d. Concern the CAP and Area Lettings Policies may have exacerbated this situation especially with the exclusion of people from the register who have broken their three year continuous residency in one borough and were unable to join the register, yet had only moved from one borough to another
 - e. Delays in processing of applications as all applicants have to go through a full registration process and be awarded no priority for re-housing
 - f. Many households who have gone through this process do not bid regularly, or are lost to the private rented sector
2. The last such review of the Choice Based lettings Scheme (CBL) was undertaken in 2013, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011.
 3. A number of changes were proposed to the current Consistent Assessment Policy to help alleviate delays in the current system for applicants, by bringing in an element of flexibility in ways households can access affordable housing.
 4. As part of the consultation process Fylde BC Environment, Health and Housing committee were updated on the 7th November 2017 on the proposed changes and it was recommended a working group be established to submit a consultation response and review the findings of the wider consultation exercise, in order for further consideration and approval of the proposed changes.
 5. The Working Group met on the 13th December 2017 to consider a consultation response to the proposed revision to the Consistent Assessment Policy, and on the 24th April 2018, to go through the consultation responses received and discuss the subsequent report for Environment Health and Housing Committee on the 5th June 2018.

Consultation response December 2017

6. Appendix 1 contains the analysis of MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast from 2015 to 2017 that was circulated at the first meeting to inform the consultation response. In summary the register has seen an increase in applicants looking for social housing, both existing social tenants wishing to transfer and new applicants looking for social rented accommodation. The majority of these households needing to move are within the private rented sector and we are seeing an increase in households living with friends or relatives and in tied accommodation. There is continuing high demand for one and two bedroom accommodation across the borough with strong demand for three and four bedroom accommodation.
7. A doc link to housing circumstances that currently reflect priority need bandings is contained in Background Papers, My Guide to Applying for a Home. During the period 1% of all households registered with a local connection to Fylde were awarded Band A priority for re-housing; 11% Band B priority; 16% combined bands C and D priority; 21% Band E priority; and, 51% Band F priority. Within Fylde approximately 35% of households wishing to move are in employment or undertaking voluntary work and the majority of households registered for re-housing are within working age 26 to 59.
8. The Working Group prepared the consultation response provided in Appendix 2, (referred to in this report as the EHH response) and this was circulated to all Councillors.

9. The consultation on the proposed changes to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast policy and system took place between 8th November 2017 and 18th December 2017.

Review of Consultation April 2018

10. At the second meeting of the Working Group consideration was given to a report on the summary of consultation responses and the proposed changes to MyHomeChoice allocations policy and lettings system. This report can be found in Appendix 6.
11. To inform the Working Group the following evidence was provided.
- a. An analysis on the allocation of properties to households without a local connection to Fylde through MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast. This report is contained in Appendix 3. This concluded:
 - Over the two year period from 01/04/2016 to 29/03/2018 a total of 351 properties were let through MyHomeChoice.
 - Of these 69 properties or 18% were let over the two year period to households without a local connection to Fylde.
 - This equates to 9% of properties per annum within Fylde being let to households with a local connection to a neighbouring authority.
 - The majority of these lets, 39%, were to households requiring sheltered accommodation when properties had been void for on average 6 weeks.
 - 30% of these lets were to households with a priority banding for re-housing (A to D) and 9% to households with no priority banding (F). In these cases the vacant properties had been void for on average 14 weeks.
 - 18% of these lets were to working households where the place of work was in the neighbouring authority, mainly in communities within Fylde that were close to the border with Blackpool, Wyre or Preston.
 - b. Information on existing stock held by registered providers in Fylde, units built under a S106 agreement (that may contain sole occupancy restrictions to Fylde) and stock that is allocated through local connection policies of the wider MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy. The report is based on property numbers received from MyHomeChoice, and is contained in Appendix 4. Within Fylde there are 3,248 units of general needs affordable rented stock and Independent Living Stock, managed by Registered Providers. Of these 619 have been enabled under a S106 planning agreement and 2,629 units would be allocated under the local connection criteria that forms MyHomeChoice Consistent Assessment Policy.
 - c. Registered Providers provided an update on properties they have in Fylde, average re-let time and areas or types of properties they have struggled letting. This information is contained in Appendix 5. Great Places advise they have a turnover of 5 units per annum with an average re-let time of 6 weeks. Places for People have 192 units with an average re-let time of 4 weeks, however Fylde stock is monitored with Wyre and Blackpool. Progress Housing have 2,519 units in Fylde and report an average re-let time of 6 weeks. General needs stock takes on average 6 weeks to let and Independent Living 7-8 weeks.
12. The summary of consultation responses in January 2018 and proposed changes to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast allocations policy is contained in Appendix 6. The following paragraphs deal with each of the proposed changes, summary of consultation responses received, EHH response with conclusions from the Working Group as to whether this proposed change is acceptable and compromises that have been reached.

Revised local connection requirement

13. Proposed change

The proposed change to the system was to enable local connection (and thereby access to the Fylde Coast housing register) to be established through connection to any of the three boroughs, so that people do not fall out of the system if they move from one part of the Fylde Coast to another.

This would mean that residents who have moved between the three Fylde Coast boroughs will now be able to get onto the housing register when previously they may not have met the local connection requirement. However priority will still be given to Blackpool residents for Blackpool homes, Fylde residents for Fylde homes, and Wyre residents for Wyre homes.

14. Consultation responses

This was comprehensively supported in the survey, and this approach will now be implemented in the new system. Local connection will continue to be possible through residence, work, or family connection. Applicants with a local connection to the borough will be given priority in the first instance.

15. The EHH consultation response supported this proposal. Currently households move between the three boroughs, and could have lived in one area for several years, move out of the borough and lose their local connection to join the register. Households would still need to have a local connection to Fylde to be allocated accommodation in the first instance.

16. Consistent Assessment Policy proposed amendments

Current policy local connection	Amended policy local connection
<p>Applicants have a local connection if they can demonstrate one of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residency – they have lived in the area consecutively for the last three years (does not include those that have been placed within the area). • Permanent employment in the area • Close family association – has a parent, adult child, adult brother or sister who is living in the area and has done so for the last 5 years • Applicants who are serving in the Armed Forces and who are either employed or are resident in the area. • Former Armed Forces Personnel who had a previous residence in the area as a result of a former posting to the area, within the last 5 years • Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Council <p>For priority when bidding, there are 3 levels of priority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connection to the LA 2. Connection to the Fylde Coast 3. No connection to either of the above (armed forces only) 	<p>When deciding eligibility, applicants must be able to demonstrate they have a local connection by one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local residency – they have lived in the Fylde Coast area consecutively for the last three years (does not include those that have been placed in the area) ▪ Permanent employment in the Fylde Coast area ▪ Close family association – has a parent, adult child, adult brother or sister who is living in the Fylde Coast area and has done so for the last 5 years ▪ Applicants who are serving in the Armed Forces and who are either employed or are resident in the Fylde Coast area ▪ Former Armed Forces personnel who had a previous residence in the Fylde Coast area as a result of a former posting to the area, within the last 5 years ▪ Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council <p>Note: A new way of allocating properties is proposed.</p>

Introduction of two ways of letting

17. Proposed change

The new system will offer at least 50% of homes, including those in the shortest supply, only to people in Bands A-C, each of these homes will be offered to the “bidder” with the highest priority. The rest of the homes will be available to everyone on the list and offered on a first come first served basis. This is designed to ensure that people in the greatest need still have access to the most homes, while offering opportunities to everyone who needs to move to move quickly to find a suitable home as soon as it is available.

18. Consultation responses

There was overall support for introducing a first come, first served lettings process alongside lettings based on priority banding, but many survey respondents had no clear view. It is proposed the new approach of two ways of letting will be taken forward, but kept under review to ensure that two thirds of lettings are made to applicants in priority bands A-C, compared with 64% to priority needs groups currently.

All lettings will give the first opportunity to applicants with a connection to the local borough. So, whether the letting is based on priority need or “first come first served”, applicants who have expressed an interest will first be prioritised based on connection to the local borough and then on priority need / time on the register (for the priority need lettings) or time of bid (for “first come, first served” lettings). This ensures that the current approach to local connection is maintained for all properties.

The policy will be slightly amended to ensure that housing providers advertise lettings under “first come first served” for at least seven days, to give local people a chance to see adverts and express an interest.

The concern about access to a computer will be addressed by making the updated system more user friendly on smart phones, which are used by the majority of applicants. It will still be possible to find out about available properties and express an interest through local offices of the Councils and partner social housing providers, but it is expected that the large majority of system users will continue to interact with the system on-line.

It is noted that the full local roll out of Universal Credit from December 2018 will require that most benefits claimants have digital access. Support is offered to applicants who struggle to understand and use the system, but the process of application will be simplified under the revised system, and this should go a long way to making the system more accessible. It is currently up to individual housing providers to organise the letting process and the notice that is given to new tenants. This will continue to be the case, but the local authorities will work with them to review their current approaches and encourage good practice.

The EHH consultation response supported the introduction of two ways of letting, but requested properties be advertised for 2 months to source an applicant with a borough local connection. It has been agreed there will be no change to the current time scales that properties are advertised. Currently properties are advertised for 7 days and a successful bidder is identified based on local connection to the authority and banding priority. If no one has placed a bid from Fylde, properties can then be offered to households with a local connection to another authority, based on banding priority.

In terms of SMS Texting the system is to upgrade the MHC software to version 10 which enables texting to be used in two separate ways to alert applicants who have agreed to receiving targeted alerts:

- 1) Via bulk texting which is sent from the system as back office admin. This can be sent to all applicants or sent to a specific group – i.e. all over 55s, postcode area if a scheme/property coming up with a S106 attached to it, if a 4 bed property all those with a more than 3 bed need.
- 2) Text messages direct to a households application – for example registered providers alerting people a property is coming up and for households to whom a homeless duty is owed.

The aim is for people to not become reliant on receiving texts to bid but if they are looking for housing to regularly check the system for vacancies.

19. Consistent Assessment Policy amendments

Current policy Selection Process	Amended policy Selection Process
<p>All eligible bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided first by any specific local connection criteria, band and then by effective date within the band. A bid for a property will not be considered if the applicant’s household does not meet the size, age or disability requirements for that property unless there are exceptional circumstances which need to be taken into account. If more than one person from the same band bids for a property, it will go to the person who has the longest waiting time within that band.</p> <p>Partner landlords advertising properties will select and interview the top applicant/s before an offer is made. Each individual landlord is responsible for the verification of the successful applicant’s circumstances, including taking up references.</p> <p>Selected applicants will be given the opportunity to view the property prior to tenancy sign- up.</p>	<p>The demand for social housing exceeds supply. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritise applications on the Housing Register to ensure housing stock is allocated appropriately.</p> <p>Properties Reserved for Applicants on the Housing Needs Register</p> <p>Shortlisting will be based on bids from applicants with a connection to the local borough and with the highest priority band. If bids are received from applicants in the same priority band, then the person with the longest Effective Date will be offered the property.</p> <p>Where a property is adapted for use by a disabled person, it will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority band whose needs best match the facilities of the advertised property.</p> <p>If there are no bids from applicants with a connection to the local borough, Partner Organisations will give consideration to applicants from other Fylde Coast areas.</p> <p>Bids will not normally be considered if an applicant’s or their household does not meet the size, age or disability requirements for the property unless there are exceptional circumstances or local lettings arrangements.</p> <p>For Properties Open to all Applicants:</p> <p>Applicants expressing an interest in these properties will be shortlisted in order of connection to the local borough, and when the bid was placed, with preference given to the earliest bids. Any bids that do not meet the criteria may be bypassed.</p>

How applicants are awarded a priority band

20. Proposed change

The proposal is to simplify the priority bands for people with a legally defined housing need so that there are only three bands, with the current bands C and D becoming a single band C. There will be no bands given to everyone else, making application simpler, while still allowing everyone to bid on first come first served homes. Households who do not have a housing need defined in law and were previously in Bands E and F are now placed on the housing register without a formal priority band.

21. Consultation responses

A relatively high 33% of respondents who disagreed with the proposal may reflect applicants who are unhappy with their current priority or length of time on the housing register without success. While local authorities have some discretion in how priority bands are defined, there is a minimum legal responsibility that applicants in “reasonable preference” categories are prioritised for at least 50% of social housing lettings. In the proposed Fylde Coast system, people in these “reasonable preference” categories are prioritised in

Bands A-C. Applicants who do not meet the legally defined criteria of Bands A – C but who have wider reasons for needing to move will have the opportunity to bid for the homes that are advertised as “first come first served”.

Time on the housing register will continue to be significant in deciding who is prioritised for homes allocated on the basis of priority need; where two applicants with the same priority band express an interest, it is the applicant who has been on the register for the longest time who is awarded the property.

22. The EHH Consultation response supported this proposal. It will simplify the understanding of housing need categories that gives households priority within the scheme.

23. Consistent Assessment Policy amendments - Proposed CAP Priority Bandings

Housing Needs Register	Criteria for each band
Band A	<p>Homeless applicants with a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Applicants with a local connection and at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vulnerable person , who faces imminent discharge from hospital or temporary residential care and for whom there is no suitable accommodation to return to • Applicants in exceptional circumstances including those in immediate danger of violence (at discretion)
Band B	<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrepair in current property with identified Category 1 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action. • Existing social housing tenant of a Partner Organisation who requires the property to be demolished or vacated. • Under occupancy of a property owned by a Partner Organisation (applicable after the start of a tenancy) • Adapted property, owned by a Partner Organisation, no longer required • Urgent medical or disability, exacerbated due to current property conditions, with a medical assessment supporting the applicants (including household members) need to be rehoused. • Armed forces personnel, currently serving or have served in the last 5 years (who meet at least one criteria from Band C) • Urgent social or welfare needs, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission into residential care or hospital if applicant is not rehoused • A dependent (under 16) will be accommodated by the Local Authority unless the applicant is rehoused into a suitable property. • The need to give or receive essential care and support • At risk of serious harm in present accommodation, for example, domestic abuse, hate crime, anti-social behaviour or witnesses of crime. • Threatened with homelessness, or owed the initial homelessness statutory duty by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council. • Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of at least two additional bedrooms. • Leaving Local Authority Care, with appropriate tenancy support, where there is a statutory duty under the Leaving Care Act 2000 to provide. • Rough Sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping who are

	<p>supported and referred by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Local Authority Housing Teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving supported housing or rehabilitation accommodation and are ready for independent living with tenancy support (if required) in place.
Band C	<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical or disability conditions (with no detrimental impact) with a medical assessment supporting the applicants need to be rehoused. Social or Welfare needs, for example, applicant requires to be rehoused to a particular area to avoid hardship to themselves or others. Disrepair in current property with identified Category 2 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action. Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of one additional bedroom. Homeless with no priority need and no statutory duty owed by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council In supported or rehabilitation accommodation and not ready for independent living and no tenancy support in place. Armed forces personnel currently serving or have served in the last five years.

Restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants

24. Proposed change

The proposal is that existing social housing tenants should not be able to register for a new social housing property unless they have a housing need (Including current under occupancy). The purpose is to prioritise new applicants who are not already housed in social housing. Consultation response

Many respondents did not have a view either way and 23% disagreed. Local housing providers were concerned that they may lose working tenants if this exclusion did not allow some movement to be close to new job roles. The intention is to allow existing social housing tenants to register for new social housing if they either have a housing need or they are in permanent employment.

25. The EHH consultation response supported this proposal. The availability of affordable housing within Fylde is not sufficient to meet the levels of housing need and existing social housing tenants should not be able to move unless they have been awarded a priority based on their current circumstances.

26. Consistent Assessment Policy amendments

Current policy for existing tenants wishing to transfer	Amended policy for existing tenants wishing to transfer
<p>All existing tenants of partners have the right to apply for a transfer, subject to having been a tenant of their current property for a minimum period of twelve months and any restrictions that apply to their tenancy. Applications for transfers are considered in the same way as a new application. Tenants' housing needs will be assessed and placed in the relevant band in the scheme together with all other applicants.</p> <p>In order to qualify, tenants must give access for a property inspection, viewings and sign ups and leave their home in good repair and decorative order. Tenants with rent arrears or other breaches of the tenancy agreement may be suspended from the scheme</p>	<p>Existing tenants of Partner Organisations have the right to apply for a transfer, subject to being in housing need/permanent employment, and any restrictions that apply to their tenancy. Applications for transfers will be processed in the same way as a new application. Tenants' housing needs will be assessed and awarded appropriate banding.</p> <p>To qualify, tenants must allow access for property inspections, viewings and sign ups. Properties must also be left in a good state of repair and in decorative order. Tenants with rent arrears or other breaches of their tenancy agreement may be suspended from the scheme</p>

Priority to people in paid or voluntary work

27. Proposed change

The proposal slightly increases the chances for access to social housing for working applicants, in a similar way that Band E does under the existing system. The proposal is that 20% of homes made available on a first come first served basis will be offered with priority to people in paid or voluntary work. The proposed new policy seeks to strike a balance between meeting the needs of people in the greatest housing need, with providing opportunities for people who are working and often struggling to afford good quality market accommodation

28. Consultation responses

More people supported this proposal than disagreed, but there were comments both supporting and disagreeing with this approach. Given the opposing views for and against there was overall balance of support for the proposal, therefore the intention is that this aspect of the policy will be implemented.

29. The EHH Consultation response supported this proposal if there is a clear definition of 'working' and the revised allocations policy undergoes an impact assessment to ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act.

30. The current policy details where at least one of the applicants is currently in employment. For the purposes of this consistent assessment policy employment is described as:

1. Over 16 hours a week (unless the remuneration is substantial)
2. The main place of work is within the Authority
3. Offers of employment should be regular, intended to last for more than 12 months and there is a genuine intention to take up the offer of work
4. Appropriate evidence is provided which may include contract of employment, wage/salary slips, formal offer letter and tax and benefits information.

31. The Fylde Council legal team have provided comments on the proposed Consistent Assessment Policy and Equality Impact Assessment. Comments have been and have fed back to the Fylde Coast Housing Providers for further consideration around the Equality Act in respect to working households and data sharing under the changes with the General Data Protection Regulations which came into force from 01/04/2018.

32. Consistent Assessment Policy amendments

Current Policy on employed households	Amended policy concerning employed households
<p>Employed households are currently given priority under BAND E</p> <p>To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate a local connection and one of the following ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one adult member of the household is in full time employment either in the local area or elsewhere • At least one adult member of the household is contributing to the community through voluntary work 	<p>A maximum of 50% of properties advertised will be made available to all applicants registered on the system - those on the Housing Needs register and those who are not. Applicants expressing an interest in these properties will be shortlisted in order of when their bid was placed, with the preference given to the earliest bids.</p> <p>In order to recognise and reward those who work and make a contribution to the community, 20% of lettings available to all applicants will prioritise people who meet the working households and community contribution criteria.</p>

Flexibility in the sizes of properties that applicants can bid for

33. Proposed change

Under the current CAP the number of bedrooms for which applicants are eligible is determined by the size of their households and in line with DWP regulations. Instead of allowing applicants to express an interest in a home that meets their household’s minimum needs, the new proposal will allow households, as long as the rent is affordable, to be able to get a homes that has one extra bedroom. The intention is to make social housing attractive to a wider range of people.

34. Consultation responses

There was very strong support for this policy in both the survey response and comments. But there is also concern to ensure that those properties that are in the shortest supply – typically large family houses – continue to be allocated to people who need all of the space.

It is proposed that the policy to allow applicants to register and be able to bid on properties with one bedroom more than their minimum requirement will be implemented, but there are likely to be restrictions placed at the point of advertising and letting on under-occupying large properties in local areas where these are in short supply.

35. The EHH consultation response disagreed with this proposal. Currently there is not enough stock within Fylde to allow households to under occupy accommodation. A compromise has been reached where applicants can only be allocated one extra bedroom and at the point of advertising restrictions can be placed on letting on under-occupying large properties in local areas where these are in short supply.

36. Consistent Assessment Policy amendments

Current policy on property sizes	Proposed policy on property sizes
<p>The numbers of bedrooms for which applicants are eligible is determined by the size of their household and in line with DWP regulations. As there is a shortage of larger homes, applicants are advised to consider a property that has two living rooms where one can reasonably be used as a bedroom.</p> <p>Single adults or couples (16+) = 1 bed</p> <p>Two adults (16+) living together but not in a relationship = 2 bed</p> <p>Parent(s) 1 child = 2 bed</p> <p>Parent(s) with 2 children of same sex or different sexes under the age of 10 = 2 bed</p> <p>Parents(s) with children of different sexes – one or both being over the age of 10 = 3 bed</p>	<p>The numbers of bedrooms which applicants need is determined by the size of the household and in line with DWP regulations. As there is a shortage of larger homes, applicants are advised to consider a property that has two living rooms where one can reasonably be used as a bedroom.</p> <p>The number of bedrooms needed is calculated as one bedroom for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every adult couple ▪ Any other person aged 16 or over ▪ Any two children of the same sex ▪ Any two children regardless of sex under age 10 ▪ Any other child <p>Applicants will be permitted to bid for a property in accordance with their calculated need and also for properties with one bedroom more than their calculated need. But letting of properties that are larger than an applicant’s calculated need will be subject to affordability and pre-tenancy checks.</p> <p>Providers may advertise some properties that are in short supply, such as large houses, as only being available to applicants whose calculated need is the same as the size of the property.</p>

Whether the arrangements overall will enable the best use of social housing

37. Consultation responses

There was positive feedback from the survey that a majority of respondents think that the arrangements overall will enable the best use of social housing, with only 11% disagreeing. There were further comments on how the system operates, including age restrictions for ground floor properties and a suggestion that down-sizing is dealt with outside of the system.

38. Age restrictions, and housing providers' local lettings policies more generally, will be kept under review to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of particular groups (like older residents) and opportunities for the wider population.

39. The EHH consultation response neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. It was recommended that the policy is reviewed after a period of two years.

Income and savings threshold

40. Proposed change

There were no changes proposed to the income and savings threshold, but the consultation sought to get views on whether these remained appropriate.

41. Consultation responses

The survey response showed general support for maintaining the existing thresholds, but many comments were received that advocated either lowering or, conversely, removing the thresholds.

42. EHH consultation response agreed that the current restrictions on income and savings for social rented accommodation within Fylde.

Conclusions

43. Through the Working Group a full and considered consultation response was provided to the Fylde Coast Housing Providers (Appendix 2) on the proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy of MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast (Allocations Policy) and the results of the wider consultation (Appendix 6) studied. Information was provided to enable the Working Group to consider the impact of the proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy, namely; Appendix 1 analysis of circumstances of households registering with MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast 2015-2017; Appendix 3, Analysis of properties allocated to households outside of Fylde; Appendix 4, Current affordable stock within Fylde; and, Appendix 5 Feedback from Registered Providers.

44. The proposed changes will help to alleviate delays in the current system for applicants by bringing in an element of flexibility in ways households can access affordable housing. Registering for re-housing will become simpler and quicker to access and more responsive to mobile phone internet use. It will also address the concerns registered providers have expressed in the letting of their stock within Fylde via MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast.

45. It is recommended the proposed changes to MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast allocations policy and lettings system are accepted and a similar review of information supplied to the Working Group be undertaken in one year's time, by this Committee. The purpose to ensure MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast continues to meet the strategic role of the Authority in assessing and meeting housing need within the borough.

46. A draft copy of the revised CAP February 2018 and Equality Impact Assessment January 2018 are available in Appendices 7 and 8.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None
Legal	Revised allocations policy undergoes an impact assessment to ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act and GDPR.
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
My Guide to Applying for a Home	2011	www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk https://www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk/NovaWeb/Infrastructure/ViewLibraryDocument.aspx?ObjectID=306
MHC Consistent Assessment Policy	2011	https://www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/176.aspx

Attached documents:

Appendix 1 – Analysis of households registered with MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast 2015 to 2017 – October 2017

Appendix 2 – Environment Health and Housing Consultation response

Appendix 3 - Analysis of allocation of properties to households without a local connection to Fylde

Appendix 4 - Current Stock held by Registered Providers in Fylde April 2018

Appendix 5 - Feedback from registered providers

Appendix 6 - MHC Consultation Summary Jan 18

Appendix 7 - MHC Consistent Assessment Policy - 28th Feb 2018

Appendix 8 - Equality Impact Assessment CAP MHC Jan 2018



Appendix 1

October 2017

Analysis of households registered with MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast 2015-17

Table 1 details the number of households with a local connection to Fylde who are active on the MyHomeChoice (HHC) register and able to bid. This shows a steady increase in applicants since 2015. Transfer applicants are households already housed in social housing who have been in their tenancy for at least 12 months.

Table 1: Analysis of MHC for residents with a local connection to Fylde

Application Status	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017
Active applicants as at 31/03 or 31/06/2017	831	975	1241	1316
Of which transfer applicants as at 31/03 or 30/06/2017	186	202	270	289

Table 2 details the owner of applicants' current accommodation. Information in Table 1 is solely for households who are active and able to bid on the register, Table 2 is for all applicants registered who will either be active, being assessed, closed, cancelled or suspended.

Since 2015 the numbers of households renting from a private landlord has remained high. The scheme has also seen a rise of 50% of households living with relatives who wish to set up an independent home. Tenants of Council or a Housing Association would be transfer applicants. In the past year we have also seen a rise in households who are in accommodation tied to their employment.

Table 2: Who owns your current accommodation?

Owner of Accommodation	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017
I am the Owner	137	153	164	170
Living with Friends/Others	27	36	43	43
Living with Relatives	107	132	190	213
No Fixed Abode	19	28	59	57
Occupier/Leaseholder	17	25	24	22
Other (please state)	63	72	99	100
Shared Ownership	12	16	15	16
Social Services	3	10	5	5
Tenant of a Private Landlord	456	590	789	838
Tenant of Council	40	58	85	93
Tenant of Housing Association	257	303	403	423
Tied Accommodation	7	8	10	41
Blank	30	34	39	46
TOTAL	1175	1465	1925	2067

Table 3 details the number of household members in applications. This data is for all applicants registered who will either be active, being assessed, closed, cancelled or suspended. This shows a continuing high demand for one and two bedroom accommodation across the borough as has been the case since 31/03/2015. There is also an increased demand for three and four bedroomed accommodation.

Table 3: Number of household members

No. of Household Members	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017
1	492	615	805	867
2	345	445	577	597
3	172	199	266	291
4	89	115	148	166
5	51	64	89	100
6	17	14	24	27
7	6	9	8	12
8	3	3	6	6
9	0	0	1	1
10+	0	0	0	0
Blank	0	1	1	0
Total	1175	1465	1925	2067

Households registering for MHC are given priority banding based on their housing need. The main priority bands are A to D. The doc link below gives access to 'My Guide to Applying for a Home' that gives more detail on household circumstances that are reflected in the priority banding.

<https://www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk/NovaWeb/Infrastructure/ViewLibraryDocument.aspx?ObjectID=306>

Table 4 gives the breakdown for households with an active application by priority banding at any one time registered on MHC back to 31/03/2015.

Table 4 – Breakdown of Banding awarded to active households

Band	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017	% of active households
A	2	8	12	13	1%
B	94	110	136	140	11%
C	1	4	16	16	16%
D	112	137	179	196	
E	157	187	262	278	21%
F	465	528	634	671	51%
No Band	0	1	2	2	.15%
Total	831	975	1241	1316	

Table 5 analyses the number of active applicants that are employed or undertaking voluntary work. Band E is specifically for applicants working, employed or voluntary. Since 2015 the register approximately 35% of households wishing to move into social housing are in employment of undertaking voluntary work. Fylde BC has the highest number of employed applicants registered across the Fylde Coast.

Table 5: Active applicants that are employed

31/03/2015 Fylde	A	B	C	D	E	F	No Band	Total
Employed	0	25	0	33	145	92	0	295
% of Active Applicants employed in band	0	26.6%	0%	29.46%	92.36%	19.78%	0	<i>35.5% of all active applicants (831)</i>
31/03/2016 Fylde	A	B	C	D	E	F	No Band	Total
Employed	0	29	0	44	169	99	0	341
% of Active Applicants employed in band	0%	26.36%	0%	32.12%	90.37%	18.75%	0%	<i>34.97% of all active applicants (975)</i>
31/12/2016 Qtr 3 16/17 Fylde (no report for 31/03/2017)	A	B	C	D	E	F	No Band	Total
Employed	1	31	2	57	212	111	0	414
% of Active Applicants employed in band	10%	25.62%	12.5%	34.13%	89.08%	18.47%	0%	<i>35.84% of all active applicants (1155)</i>
31/06/2017 Fylde	A	B	C	D	E	F	No Band	Total
Employed	4	32	2	63	252	116	0	469
% of Active Applicants employed in band	30.77%	22.86%	12.5%	32.14%	90.65%	17.29%	0%	<i>35.6% of all active applicants (1316)</i>

Table 7 details the age group of the main applicant within each household for all applications registered on the Register. The majority of applicants are within working age 26 to 59. Since 2015 the Register has seen an increase in all age bands, bar 16-18 year olds where numbers have reduced since 2016.

Table 7: Age group of main applicant

Age Group	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017
16-18	1	5	2	2
19-25	120	125	197	205
26-40	331	436	582	655
41-59	369	467	584	624
60-65	102	119	149	154
66-74	123	158	209	213
75+	129	155	202	214
Blank	0	0	0	0
Total	1175	1465	1925	2067

Table 8 details the number of bids placed annually since 2015. Table 9 details the number of properties let per band each quarter. These two tables below illustrate for every property advertised in the first quarter of each year going back to 2015/16, there are an average of 6 bids per property.

- 2015/16 Qtr 1 168 bids for 24 properties = 7 bids per property
- 2016/17 Qtr 1 212 bids for 45 properties = 5 bids per property
- 2017/18 Qtr 1 216 bids for 39 properties = 5 bids per property

Table 8: No of applicants bidding per month

2014/15	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total annual bids
	33	54	101	90	47	141	45	56	113	38	36	41	795
2015/16	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	44	36	88	67	41	117	33	42	98	25	39	96	726
2016/17	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	46	56	110	32	57	126	70	57	101	48	58	145	906
2017/18	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	37	54	125										

Over the past 2 years (from Qtr 1 2015/16) 997 properties have been let in Fylde through MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast. Of those 55% have been allocated to Priority Bands on the MyHomeChoice register A to D. 17% to households in employment and 28% to households in low priority.

- 4% have been allocated to households in Band A
- 24% to households in Band B
- 2% to households in Band C
- 25% to households in Band D
- 17% to households in Band E
- 28% to households in Band F

Table 9: No of properties let per band at the end of each quarter from Qtr 1 2015/16

Band	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	TOTAL
A	1	2	2	4	1	4	8	10	2	34
B	5	27	35	48	10	24	42	44	7	242
C	0	1	2	2	1	3	6	6	2	23
D	9	29	44	60	8	18	32	39	10	249
E	5	12	20	34	9	18	27	31	10	166
F	4	24	34	51	16	29	50	67	8	283
Total	24	95	137	199	45	96	165	197	39	997

Table 10 details bids per property type and as would be expected there is demand for flat and house accommodation. Demand for sheltered housing appears to have remained static over the past three years, despite the growth on the housing register (Table 7) of households aged over 65.

Table 10: Bids by property type

Property Type	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	30/06/2017
Bedsit/Studio	0	0	2	0
Sheltered Bedsit / Studio	2	7	2	0
Bungalow	70	50	21	49
Sheltered Bungalow	22	19	13	9
Flat	194	201	344	221
Multi-storey Flat	1	0	0	0
Sheltered Flat	69	42	74	68
House	256	230	364	531
Sheltered House	0	0	0	0
Maisonette	2	0	1	0
Sheltered Maisonette	0	0	0	0

Kirstine Riding
Housing Services Manager
October 2017



Housing Strategy
One Bickerstaffe Square
Talbot Road
Blackpool
FY1 3AH

Please Ask For: Kirstine Riding

Telephone: 01253 658658

Email: Kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk

Also sent by email to:

Andrew.foot@blackpool.gov.uk

Date: 18 December 2017

Tahira.chohan@blackpool.gov.uk

Dear Fylde Coast Housing Providers

Re: Consultation on access to Social Housing

On behalf of Environment, Health and Housing Committee Fylde BC I am writing to formally respond to the consultation on the proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme across the Fylde Coast, MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast.

This consultation has given us an opportunity to reflect on the role of the scheme in allocating social housing within Fylde and we would like to pass on our gratitude for the success of the scheme and the management arrangements in place that regularly review and update the scheme.

The proposed changes have been discussed at some length by Committee with feedback from the Housing Team at Fylde Council. Overall we would like to make the following comments:

1. We welcome the letting priority for households with a local connection to Fylde first and would request a period of 2 months be considered for households with a local connection to Fylde being sourced, prior to households from other boroughs being considered for accommodation. Based on the relet times we have been provided by registered providers with stock in Fylde this should not be an impossible consideration.
2. A Review of the changes after a period of two years that is informed by:
 - With the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act the proposed changes need to enable local authorities to meet their new statutory prevention and relief duties. If in the allocation of properties local authorities are struggling to re-house households within the social rented sector the allocations policy will need to be revisited.
 - We understand a main driver for the changes in the challenges facing registered providers in allocating hard to let stock. We would recommend a review as to whether the proposed changes have improved the void turn-around times.
3. Social rented accommodation is more affordable than affordable rented tenure as the rents charged are more in line with HRA rates. In Fylde 2017/18 LHA rates are– Shared £61.50; 1

bedroom £85.00; 2 bedrooms £113.92; 3 bedrooms £130.00, and 4 bedroom £150.00. A higher percentage of social rented, as opposed to affordable rented need to be restricted for households in housing need applying for properties through that route as these households are more likely to be in receipt of Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit.

4. Condition properties are being re-let in needs to be considered, especially if one of the aspirations for the change is to compete with the private rented sector, where properties are often painted with carpets and curtains. This would be especially important with properties in hard to let areas. Decorating vouchers are paid, however if households are vulnerable with physical or mental health difficulties they potentially need more support to move into their new home.
5. Additional lettings restrictions on hard to let schemes need to be reviewed, for example no under 18's for 2 bedroom upper floor flats. Ruling out couples and families.
6. Where accommodation is for over 55's there is often support provided which can vary from an intercom to call centre to Scheme Manager visits. We would welcome this being means tested to some degree, to avoid households who could afford to purchase such provision off the open market accessing and removing the supply from households who are less able to afford open market provision.
7. Fylde BC does not own or manage social housing stock, however we still have a role to assess and plan for housing needs across all tenures and to make best use of existing stock to meet that need. Fylde BC will still operate with an Area Lettings Plan that will run alongside the Consistent Assessment Policy, this will be updated annually.
8. We would also recommend as part of the revised policy a marketing exercise is undertaken to promote the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast.

In response to the individual consultation responses?

1. Do you live in:

This is a response on behalf of Fylde Councillors who represent residents within Fylde.

2. Do you agree or disagree with the revised local connection requirement?

We strongly agree with this proposal. Currently households move between the three boroughs, and could have lived in one area for several years, move out of the borough and lose their local connection. We understand that households would still need to have a local connection to Fylde to be allocated accommodations in the first instance and as in point 1 above, we would request a time period of 2 months for households with a local connection to Fylde to be sourced before the properties are opened up to households from neighbouring boroughs.

3. Do you agree with the introduction of two ways of lettings?

We agree with this proposal and would request further consideration is given to points 1 to 6 in our overall comments above.

4. Do you agree with how applicants are awarded a priority band?

We strongly agree with this proposal. It will simplify the understanding of housing need categories that gives households priority within the scheme.

5. Do you agree with restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants?

We strongly agree with this proposal. The availability of affordable housing within Fylde is not sufficient to meet the levels of housing need and existing social housing tenants should not be able to move unless they have been awarded a priority based on their current circumstances.

6. Do you agree with the priority for working applicants for some homes?

We agree with this proposal if there is a clear definition of 'working'. Within Fylde we have seen a growth in households accessing advice who are on zero hours contract, who may one week have less than 10 hours and the next week over 30 hours. In addition we are seeing a growth in households joining the register in tied accommodation.

We would advise the new allocations policy undergoes an impact assessment to ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act.

7. Do you agree with giving more flexibility in the size of properties that applicants can bid for?

We strongly disagree with this proposal. Currently there is not enough stock within Fylde to allow households to under occupy accommodation. There is also the risk that if household's circumstances change and they need to apply for benefit towards their housing costs, they could quickly become in rent arrears and face the risk of losing their tenancy.

8. Do you think that, overall, the proposed arrangements will enable us to make the best use of the social housing stock in the area?

We neither, agree or disagree with this statement. As mentioned in our overall response we would request this policy is reviewed after a period of two years. In addition we welcome some changes such as changes to the priority banding, intention to meet the needs of households in employment and the simplification of priority bandings, but we disagree with households being allocated larger properties than their housing requirements and some allocation policies and the condition properties are re-let in need to be reviewed.

9. Do you agree with the current income and savings thresholds?

We strongly agree with the current restrictions on income and savings for social rented accommodation within Fylde. Over the past couple of years we have worked to deliver different intermediate tenures on sites such as shared ownership and discounted market sale for households who may struggle to purchase off the open market. Social rented accommodation is a restricted tenure within Fylde.

Thank you in advance for considering our response to the Consultation and we look forward to receiving a draft of the revised Consistent Assessment Policy for consideration by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee at Fylde BC.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Aitken". The letter "B" is large and stylized, followed by a period and the name "Aitken" in a cursive script.

Ben Aitken
Chair Environment, Health and Housing Committee
Fylde BC

Appendix 3

My Home Choice Lettings data

From 01/04/2016 to 29/03/2018

This analysis focussed on the allocation of properties to households without a local connection to Fylde through MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast.

Conclusions

- Over the two year period from 01/04/2016 to 29/03/2018 a total of 351 properties were let through MyHomeChoice.
- Of these 69 or 18% were let over the two year period to households without a local connection to Fylde.
- This equates to 9% of properties per annum within Fylde being let to households with a local connection to a neighbouring authority.
- The majority of these lets, 39%, were to households requiring sheltered accommodation when properties had been void for on average 6 weeks.
- 30% of these lets were to households with a priority banding for re-housing (A to D) and 9% to households with no priority banding (F). In these cases the vacant properties had been void for on average 14 weeks.
- 18% of these lets were to working households where the place of work was in the neighbouring authority, mainly in communities within Fylde that were close to the border with Blackpool, Wyre or Preston.

Of these 69 relets

1. 39% (27 properties) were let to households requiring sheltered accommodation
 - 14 of these households had a priority need to move and were in Bands A to D.
 - 13 households did not have a priority need and were in Band F.
 - The average void level for these 27 sheltered relets was 6 weeks.
 - Void periods were greater for sheltered units let to households in Band F, the maximum period being 16 weeks void.
 - There were difficulties letting all sizes of sheltered accommodation - 1 bed ground floor flats, 1 bed bungalows, 1 and 2 bed first and second floor sheltered units.
2. 30% (21 properties) were let to households with a priority banding for re-housing.
 - The average void periods for these 21 properties was 14.5 weeks
3. 18% (12 properties) were let to working households in neighbouring authorities.
 - These were mainly in areas close to neighbouring authorities such as Staining, Warton and Clifton.
 - The average void period for these 12 properties was 4.5 weeks.
4. 13% (9 properties) were let to households who did not have a priority need for re-housing
 - The average void periods for these 9 properties was 14 weeks.

APPENDIX 4

CURRENT STOCK HELD BY REGISTERED PROVIDERS WITHIN FYLDE FOR RENT APRIL 2018 INCLUDING NEW BUILD STOCK

GENERAL NEEDS STOCK INFORMATION

Text = To be delivered

	S106 units	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	MHC CAP Policy
Accent Housing Limited		0	16	10	0	26
TOTAL STOCK = 26						26
City West Housing Trust Limited	8 Chain Lane, Staining 38 The Pastures, Mowbreck Lane, Wesham 16 Riversleigh Farm, Warton 27 Brookwood Park, Kirkham (11 delivered so far) 6 Clifton View, St Annes 5 Kings Close, Staining 23, Sunnybank Mill, Kirkham 21 Willow Drive Wrea Green 2 93 St Albans, St Annes	23	87	36	0	0
TOTAL STOCK = 146	146	23	87	36	0	0
Community Gateway Association Limited		0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL STOCK = 1	0					1
Great Places Housing Association	5 Clifton Drive North, St Annes 18 Lytham Quays, Lytham 3 Cottage Fold, Smith Mews, Wrea Green 16 Rock Works, St Annes 15 Harrison Mews (Former Kwik Save), St Annes 8 Richmond Avenue, Wrea Green 27 Little Tarnbrick,	29	70	36	2	72

	Kirkham 10 Church Road Methodist Church					
TOTAL STOCK = 174	102					72
Manchester and District Housing Association Limited		2	18	5	0	25
Manchester and District Independent Living Stock		76	13			91
TOTAL STOCK = 116	0					116
Muir Group Housing Association Limited	21 Crossing Gates Lane 9 Yew Tree Gardens, Whitehills 20 BAE, Warton (11 Handed over)	5	23	15	3	4
TOTAL STOCK = 54	50					4
Progress Housing Association Limited	87 Willowfields, Wesham 2 The Close Kirkham 26 Orders Lane, Kirkham 20 Harbour Lane, Warton 26 Keenans Mill 111 Heyhouses, St Annes 12 St Michaels Close, Weeton 12 St Georges , Kirkham	252	678	568	56	1,817
Progress Independent Living Stock		18	382	6	0	406
TOTAL STOCK = 2,519	296					2,223
Places for People Homes Limited	25 Westgate Road, St Annes	24	85	54	4	167
TOTAL STOCK = 192	25					167
Regenda Limited		6	6	6	2	20
TOTAL STOCK = 20	0					20
TOTAL REGISTERED PROVIDER STOCK IN FYLDE 3,248	BUILT UNDER A S106 AGREEMENT 619					MHC CAP policies 2,629

Changes to MHC Consultation - Feedback from Registered Providers

December 2017

Registered Providers were approached and requested the total number of properties that they have in Fylde, average re-let time and areas or types of properties they struggled letting. Responses were received from Great Places, Places for People, ForViva and Progress Housing.

1. Great Places

137 units in Fylde. Small turnover of 5 units per annum, which equates to less than 4%. Average re-let time 44 days (6 weeks).

Struggle to allocate flats in Houses of Multiple Occupancy of which they have several such schemes including 451 and 435 Clifton Drive where they have 2 bed flats which are difficult to let due to bedroom tax issues. These flats are for residents over 18 year old therefore households with children cannot reside there.

2. Places for People

192 units within Fylde. Fylde stock is monitored with Wyre and Blackpool stock. Current re-let period for that area is 28.17 days (4 weeks). They report difficulties with letting first floor general needs properties.

3. ForViva

61 units within Fylde. Have only had 1 void since they began to work in the area 2 years ago and relet time was 12 days where the property was in VOID works.

4. Progress Housing

2519 units in Fylde. There have been 299 lettings since April 2017 with an average re-let time of 42.3 days (6 weeks). Void re-let times are provided in the table below.

	General Needs		Independent Living		COMBINED	
	NUMBER	AVERAGE TIME	NUMBER	AVERAGE TIME	NUMBER	AVERAGE TIME
Ansdell	8	23.9	3	39.7	11	28.2
Clifton	4	22.3			4	22.3
Freckleton	16	35.1	8	162.6	24	77.6
Greenhalgh	1	54.0			1	54.0
Hey Houses	18	20.8	16	44.4	34	31.9
Kirkham	27	44.4	18	56.8	45	49.4
Little	2	20.0			2	20.0

Eccleston						
Lytham	11	33.0	29	31.2	40	31.7
Newton	3	22.7			3	22.7
Salwick	1	32.0			1	32.0
St Annes	45	43.6	33	47.4	78	45.2
Staining	8	37.1			8	37.1
Warton	14	35.9			14	35.9
Weeton	4	17.0			4	17.0
Wesham	24	27.2	6	93.2	30	40.4
Grand Total	186	34.7	113	54.7	299	42.3

Proposed changes to MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast allocations policy and lettings system

Summary of consultation responses, January 2018

Introduction

Consultation on proposed changes to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast policy and system took place between 8th November 2017 and 18th December 2017. The Consultation was publicised through:

- Fylde Coast local authority websites
- Mailshots to key stakeholders and registered applicants to the MyHomeChoice scheme (approx. 4600)
- Fylde Coast local authority offices
- Press Release
- MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast website

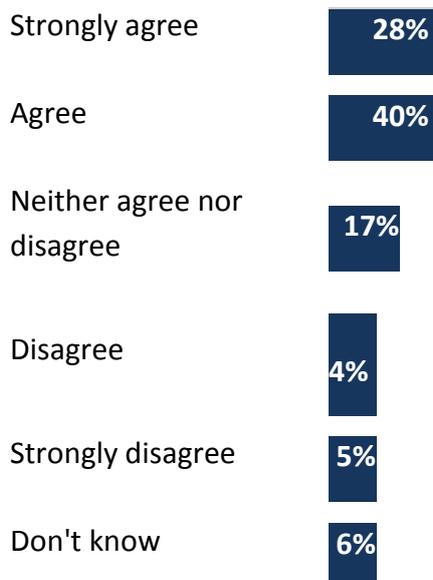
The summary of the changes proposed, and consultation questions, is attached at Appendix 1.

Respondents could complete a response either on-line or by submitting a paper copy of the consultation questionnaire. In total 258 response questionnaires were received.

Results from the consultation survey

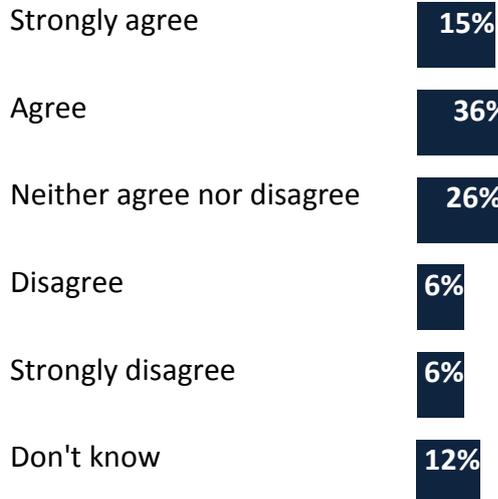
The results from the consultation survey are as set out below.

1. Do you agree with the revised local connection requirement?



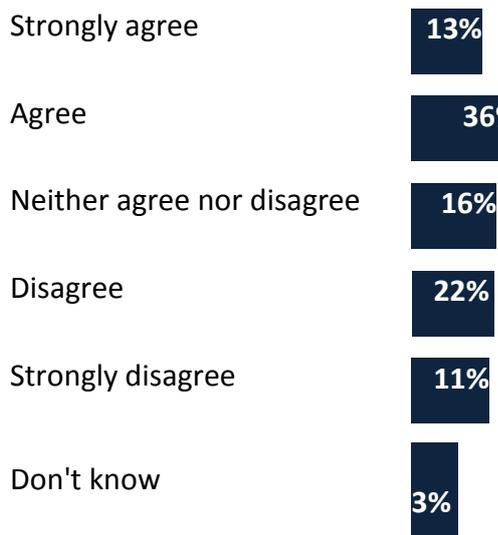
68% of respondents agreed with the revised local connection requirements, with 9% disagreeing.

2. Do you agree with the introduction of two ways of letting?



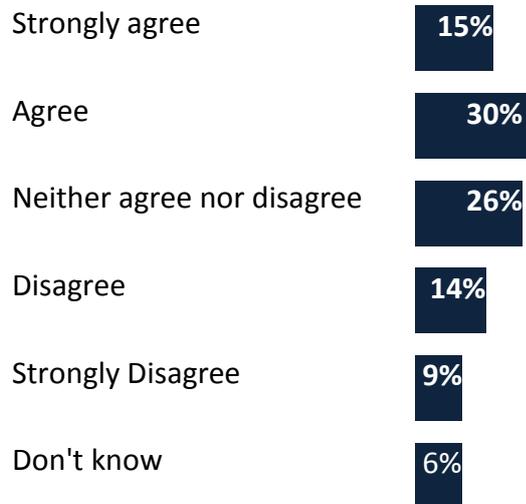
51% agreed with the introduction of two ways of letting, and 12% disagreed, but 38% of those who responded neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't know.

3. Do you agree with how applicants are awarded a priority band?



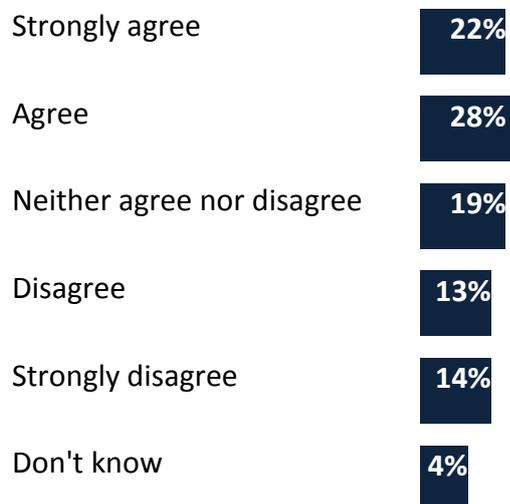
49% of respondents agreed with how applicants are awarded a priority band with 33% not in agreement.

4. Do you agree with restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants?



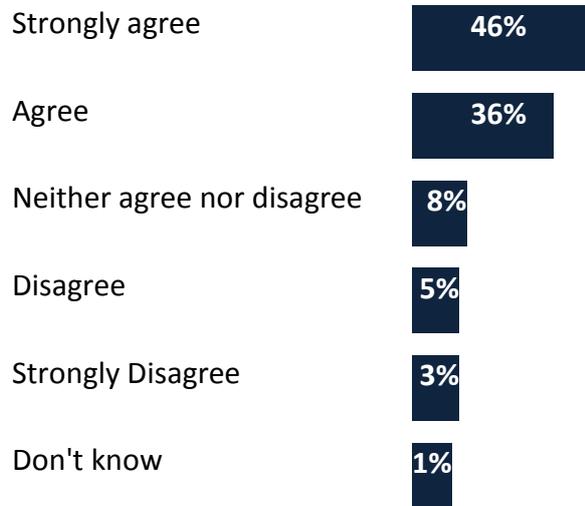
45% agreed with the restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants. 23% disagreed, but 26% neither agreed nor disagreed.

5. Do you agree with the proposed priority for working applicants for some homes?



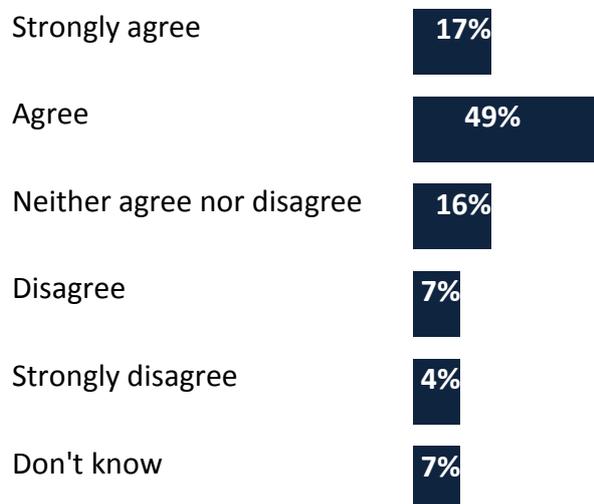
Half of the respondents agreed with the proposed priority for working applicants for some homes but 27% were in disagreement.

6. Do you agree with giving more flexibility in the size of properties that applicants can bid for?



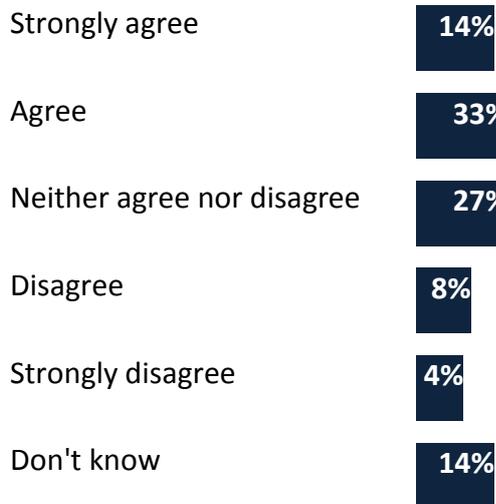
83% agreed with giving more flexibility in the size of properties that applicants can bid for.

7. Do you think that, overall, the proposed new arrangements will enable us to make the best use of the social housing stock in the area?



66% of respondents felt the proposed new arrangements will enable the local authorities to make best use of the social housing stock in the area. 11% were in disagreement.

8. Do you agree that the current income and savings thresholds are correct?



47% agreed with the current income and savings threshold are correct and 12% disagreed, but 41% of applicants neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't know.

Comments on the Proposals

Respondents were also given the opportunity to give comments on the proposals. There were 103 responses and this feedback has been collated and summarised under the categories listed below:

A. How applicants are prioritised for social housing

1. Income and Savings Eligibility Criteria, and Priority for working households

There were mixed comments on these issues.

Some respondents felt that there shouldn't be any threshold - one respondent commented that applicants with savings of £30k + are not necessarily financially stable, so should be allowed onto the register. Practically it is difficult for housing providers to verify applicants' savings in any case.

Another commentator saw having any maximum income and savings threshold as contributing to the marginalisation of social housing by deterring some honest people who might be interested in social housing and would add positively to the social mix in areas of social housing.

Some respondents supported the proposal to prioritise 20% of lettings available to all applicants to people who meet the working household and community contribution criteria as a positive change.

But some respondents felt that social housing should only be allocated to low income households, so there should be a lower income threshold in place.

One comment was that the household income threshold is too high because it is above the average income within the Fylde Coast area and the maximum income threshold should be no more than £50k.

2. Priority Banding

Some respondents raised concerns on how applicants are awarded a priority banding and felt the criteria should be widened, and in particular, more consideration should be given to the length of time an applicant has been on the housing register.

3. Priority for ground floor properties

Including age restrictions on properties was not favoured by some respondents, as ground floor accommodation in particular could benefit all residents.

4. Wider choice of property sizes

The opportunity to bid for properties with an additional bedroom, for those with financial means, was seen as a positive change with benefits for working families.

5. Local Connection

It was agreed that the local connection criteria should take into consideration applicants working in the Fylde Coast area. Some respondents disagreed with continuing to prioritise properties to applicants with a connection to particular local boroughs, while others were concerned to ensure that the link to each borough continued to be a core requirement for all lettings.

B. The Process for Applying for and Letting social housing

1. Registering an application

It was commented that the process to register a rehousing application or update existing information is cumbersome and should be simplified.

2. Advertisement of properties

The proposal to advertise properties as soon as they are available received mixed views. Those in disagreement felt applicants without regular access to a computer would be disadvantaged.

3. First come first served approach

Some respondents expressed concerns with letting some properties on a 'first come first serve' basis because those without regular access to the on-line letting system would be disadvantaged.

4. Lettings

The process of notifying applicants of their successful bid should be reviewed. Respondents suggested more time is given to confirm an interest in a property. Furthermore, tenancy start dates should take into consideration the notice period required by the successful applicant's current landlord. The current process can leave applicants in financial hardship.

5. Downsizing

The process to downsize a property should be simplified without the need to register an application and follow the bidding process.

6. Support

Better support should be made available for vulnerable applicants to ensure they can use the on-line lettings system and bid for suitable properties.

Response from the Local Authorities and Way Forward

Given the feedback to consultation, it is proposed to move forward on each issue as follows:

1. Local Connection

The proposed change to the system was to enable local connection (and thereby access to the Fylde Coast housing register) to be established through connection to any of the three boroughs, so that people do not fall out of the system if they move from one part of the Fylde Coast to another. This was comprehensively supported in the survey, and this approach will now be implemented in the new system.

Local connection will continue to be possible through residence, work, or family connection.

Some respondents also pressed to break down the priority given for connection to individual boroughs in allocating properties but this was not supported more generally, and will not change.

2. Introducing two ways of letting

There was overall support for introducing a first come, first served lettings process alongside lettings based on priority banding, but many survey respondents had no clear view. There were some concerns expressed about how the process would work, that people who are vulnerable or who don't have regular access to a computer would be disadvantaged, and that local connection might be compromised.

The new approach of two ways of letting will be taken forward, but kept under review to ensure that two thirds of lettings are made to applicants in priority bands A-C, compared with 64% to priority needs groups currently.

All lettings will give the first opportunity to applicants with a connection to the local borough. So, whether the letting is based on priority need or "first come first served", applicants who have expressed an interest will first be prioritised based on connection to the local borough and then on priority need / time on the register (for the priority need lettings) or time of bid (for "first come, first served" lettings). This ensures that the current approach to local connection is maintained for all properties.

The policy will be slightly amended to ensure that housing providers advertise lettings under "first come first served" for up to seven days, to give local people a chance to see adverts and express an interest.

When the system changes so that properties can be placed on the system on any working day, and some properties are "first come first served", they will be first advertised during day time hours and not at midnight (as the current weekly cycle). Consideration will be given to the time of day so that those occupied by work, education, or child care are not disadvantaged.

The concern about access to a computer will be addressed by making the updated system more user friendly on smart phones, which are used by the majority of applicants. It will still be possible to find out about available properties and express an interest through local offices of the Councils and partner social housing providers, but it is expected that the large majority of system users will continue to interact with the system on-line. It is noted that the full local roll out of Universal Credit from December 2018 will require that most benefits claimants have digital access.

Support is offered to applicants who struggle to understand and use the system, but the process of application will be simplified under the revised system, and this should go a long way to making the system more accessible.

It is currently up to individual housing providers to organise the letting process and the notice that is given to new tenants. This will continue to be the case, but the local authorities will work with them to review their current approaches and encourage good practice.

3. How applicants are awarded a priority band

The consultation proposed that the current Bands C and D are merged into a single Band C, and that those who do not have a housing need defined in law and were previously in Bands E and F are now placed on the housing register without a formal priority band. The relatively high 33% of respondents who disagreed with the proposal may reflect applicants who are unhappy with their current priority or length of time on the housing register without success.

While local authorities have some discretion in how priority bands are defined, there is a minimum legal responsibility that applicants in “reasonable preference” categories are prioritised for at least 50% of social housing lettings. In the proposed Fylde Coast system, people in these “reasonable preference” categories are prioritised in Bands A-C. Applicants who do not meet the legally defined criteria of Bands A – C but who have wider reasons for needing to move will have the opportunity to bid for the homes that are advertised as “first come first served”.

Time on the housing register will continue to be significant in deciding who is prioritised for homes allocated on the basis of priority need; where two applicants with the same priority band express an interest, it is the applicant who has been on the register for the longest time who is awarded the property.

Given the legal constraints and the balance already in the system, the way in which applicants are awarded a priority band will go forward unchanged from the consultation proposal.

4. Restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants

On balance, respondents supported the proposed change that existing social housing tenants should not be able to register for a new social housing property unless they have a housing need (including current under occupancy), but many did not have a view one way or the other and 23% disagreed. There were few comments on this issue.

Local housing providers were concerned that they may lose working tenants if this exclusion does not allow some movement to be close to new job roles, so the policy will be slightly

amended to allow existing social housing tenants to register for new social housing if they either have a housing need or they are in permanent employment.

5. Priority for working applicants for some homes

The proposal slightly increases the chances of access to social housing for working applicants, in a similar way that Band E does under the existing system. More people supported this proposal than disagreed, but there were comments both supporting and disagreeing with this approach.

The proposed new policy seeks to strike a balance between meeting the needs of people in the greatest housing need, with providing opportunities for people who are working and often struggling to afford good quality market accommodation. It also seeks to promote balanced communities within areas of social housing.

Given the opposing views for and against, but an overall balance of support for the proposal, this aspect of the policy will be implemented as proposed.

6. More flexibility in the sizes of properties that applicants can bid for

There was very strong support for this policy in both the survey responses and comments. But there is also concern to ensure that those properties that are in the shortest supply – typically large family houses – continue to be allocated to people who need all of the space.

The policy to allow applicants to register and be able to bid on properties with one bedroom more than their minimum requirement will be implemented, but there are likely to be restrictions placed at the point of advertising and letting on under-occupying large properties in local areas where these are in short supply.

7. Whether the arrangements overall will enable the best use of social housing

There was positive feedback from the survey that a majority of respondents think that the arrangements overall will enable the best use of social housing, with only 11% disagreeing. There were further comments on how the system operates, including age restrictions for ground floor properties and a suggestion that down-sizing is dealt with outside of the system.

Age restrictions, and housing providers' local lettings policies more generally, will be kept under review to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of particular groups (like older residents) and opportunities for the wider population.

It is important that the system does give priority to people looking to down-size as this helps release larger properties as well as assisting tenants to get a home that is more manageable. But this doesn't rule out a more pro-active approach by housing providers to work with their tenants outside of the allocations system to assist with moves and the freeing up of larger homes for families.

8. Income and savings thresholds

There were no changes proposed to the income and savings thresholds, but the consultation sought to get views on whether these remain appropriate. The survey response showed general support for maintaining the existing thresholds, but many comments were received that advocated either lowering or, conversely, removing the thresholds.

The argument advanced for lowering the thresholds was that social housing should only be available to people on low incomes who could not be expected to afford market housing; conversely, those who argued for removing the thresholds argued that social housing should be for a wide mix of households and that to focus only on those on the lowest incomes leads to social housing estates always being characterised by concentrations of poverty. This difference possibly reflects competing ideas on the role of social housing, but also variations across the Fylde Coast housing market area where some areas have an acute lack of access to housing that is affordable, and other areas have wider access to housing (mostly in the private rented sector) but entrenched deprivation on social housing estates.

The current thresholds do not in themselves prevent the majority of households across the Fylde Coast from accessing the housing register, but do set some limit to prevent the most affluent households from benefitting from social housing's sub-market rents. Given the balance of support, the existing income and savings thresholds will be maintained.

Appendix 1 – Consultation Information and Questions

Changes to how you access social housing in Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre

Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre Councils, together with local Registered Providers, are proposing to make some changes to how people find and are offered social housing in the area and we would like to hear your views. We want to make the My Home Choice Fylde Coast system easier to use and fairer for everyone.

How are things working now?

There are currently 6,000 people who are registered on the My Home Choice Fylde Coast system but only 2,200 have high priority (Bands A-D) because they have the greatest housing need.

Last year just under 1,200 social rented homes were let through the system, with 64% of homes let to people in Bands A-D and 36% let to everyone else.

What do we want to change?

While we can't easily make more homes available, we want to make it quicker and easier for you to find the home that you are looking for. We plan to upgrade the system and reduce the amount of information that we ask for. Homes will be advertised as soon as they are available rather than all being advertised at the same time each week.

We also want to make some changes to how we prioritise people for our homes:

One local connection to the Fylde Coast

This means that local residents who have moved between the three Fylde Coast boroughs will now be able to get onto the housing register when previously they may not have met the local connection requirement.

However priority will still be given to Blackpool residents for Blackpool homes, Fylde residents for Fylde homes, and Wyre residents for Wyre homes.

Two ways of letting homes

The new system will offer at least 50% of homes, including those in the shortest supply, only to people in Bands A-C; each of these homes will be offered to the "bidder" with the highest priority. The rest of the homes will be available to everyone on the list and offered on a first come first served basis.

This is designed to ensure that people in the greatest need still have access to the most homes, while offering opportunities to everyone who needs to move quickly to find a suitable home as soon as it is available. There will be a target that across the whole system two thirds of lettings will go to people in Bands A-C.

Three Priority bands

We plan to simplify the priority bands for people with a legally defined housing need so that there are only three bands, with the current bands C and D now becoming a single band C. There will be no bands given to everyone else, making application simpler, while still allowing everyone to bid on first come first served homes.

Existing social housing tenants can only use the system if they have a housing need

We want to prioritise new applicants who are not already housed in social housing. Social housing tenants who do have a good reason to move because their situation has changed will still be given a priority band and be able to use the system to find a new home.

Some homes will be offered with priority to people in paid or voluntary work

We want to encourage people in work to access social housing, and propose that 20% of homes made available on a first come first served basis will be offered with priority to people in paid or voluntary work.

More flexibility to get a home with an extra bedroom

Instead of only allowing you to express an interest in a home that meets your household's minimum needs, we want you to be able to get a home that has more space, as long as the rent is affordable to you. We hope that this will make social housing attractive to a wider range of people.

We would also appreciate your views on aspects of the current eligibility criteria:

Eligibility for those with high income or savings

Currently applicants whose gross household income is over £60,000, and applicants with savings over £30,000 (except those over 55) are excluded from the housing register. This means that social housing is currently restricted to those on low incomes.

The full draft new policy is available on the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast and partner organisations' websites and www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk

Tell Us What You Think

You can tell us what you think by using the on-line survey at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CBRYN

Or, complete the survey form and return it to Housing Strategy, One Bickerstaffe Square, Talbot Road, Blackpool, FY1 3AH

Please let us have your views by Monday 18th December 2017 so that we can take them into account in the new system.

Based on the responses we receive a new system would be developed and tested in the first part of 2018, and would go live in September 2018.

The current policy and system will continue to operate until the new system goes live.

My Home Choice Consultation Questions

1. Do you live in Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the revised local connection requirement?
3. Do you agree with the introduction of two ways of letting?
4. Do you agree with how applicants are awarded a priority band?
5. Do you agree with restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants?
6. Do you agree with the proposed priority for working applicants for some homes?
7. Do you agree with giving more flexibility in the size of properties that applicants can bid for?
8. Do you think that, overall, the proposed new arrangements will enable us to make the best use of the social housing stock in the area?
9. Do you agree that the current income and savings thresholds are correct?

Do you have any comments about why you agree or disagree with this proposal and any impact it might have on you/your household?

Consistent Assessment Policy



Working in Partnership with:



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Policy

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast is the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme operating across the Fylde Coast region. The Consistent Assessment Policy underpins the CBL scheme and forms the principal element of the allocation scheme for each Fylde Coast Local Authority (Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre) and Registered Provider operating in the area.

Each Local Authority has a statutory duty to have a scheme in place that sets out how social housing will be allocated. This is formulated and regularly reviewed in consultation with Local Authority members, housing providers and the public. It takes into account the level and patterns of the demand for social housing, stock profile, vacancies which are likely to become available and also reflects agreed strategic priorities.

This Policy sets out how applicants to the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* scheme will be assessed and priority awarded, ensuring a fair and efficient mechanism for the allocation of social rented homes across the Fylde Coast (including Council owned properties).

The Consistent Assessment Policy has been developed by the three Fylde Coast Local Authorities working in partnership with the following Registered Providers:

Blackpool Coastal Housing	Progress Housing Group
Great Places Housing Group	Places for People
Muir Group Housing Ltd	Regenda Group
For Housing	

In drafting this policy *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* partners have had regard to the Codes of Guidance issued by Central Government in addition to the following pieces of legislations:

- The Children's Act 2004.
- The Equalities Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Localism Act 2011

Aims of the Scheme

Although *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* provides greater choice for applicants, the scheme in itself does not increase the number of properties available. Properties are advertised and applicants are encouraged to take an active part in the process by bidding on a property. The system is transparent and is expected to provide applicants with a realistic view of their prospects of securing accommodation.

The scheme's key objectives are to:

- Create a customer led choice based lettings scheme
- Widen the choice of housing
- Ensure the scheme is open, fair and accountable
- Increase understanding and satisfaction of the letting system
- Give new tenants a feeling of ownership of their property and community
- Help create sustainable communities
- Make more efficient use of the available housing stock

- Help tackle low demand and reduce void turnaround times
- Create a single point of access to all social housing on the Fylde Coast
- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in Part VI of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002) and the Localism Act (2011)

Registered Providers participating in the scheme are committed to advertising their available properties to applicants who have applied and are registered on the system. Adverts will include a description of the property and indicate which applicants are eligible to apply. Applicants can then apply for the property of their choice provided they meet the stated eligibility criteria.

Overview of MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast

To gain access to the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* scheme, eligible applicants only have to register once. They are then able to bid for suitable properties as they are advertised by partner organisations.

To have access to social housing through *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast*, applicants must i) meet nationally defined eligibility criteria for social housing, ii) have a local connection, and iii) not have been excluded for any other reason (see section 3 for further details on eligibility).

While all homes are advertised through the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* website, there are two different routes for allocating homes:

1. Homes reserved for applicants on the Housing Needs register

A minimum of 50% of properties advertised will be made available exclusively for applicants on the Housing Needs register. High demand properties, such as but not limited to 4+ bedrooms, Extra Care Housing and adapted stock will be reserved initially for those in the Housing Need stream.

Properties will be advertised for a 7 day cycle, with the cycle starting as soon as the property becomes available, on any working day.

Applicants from the Housing Needs register who express an interest in these properties will be shortlisted for homes in order of priority need for housing and the length of time the applicant has been in that band.

2. Homes open to all applicants registered on the system

A maximum of 50% of properties advertised will be made available to all applicants registered on the system - those on the Housing Needs register and those who are not. Applicants expressing an interest in these properties will be shortlisted in order of when their bid was placed, with the preference given to the earliest bids.

In order to recognise and reward those who work and make a contribution to the community, 20% of lettings available to all applicants will prioritise people who meet the working households and community contribution criteria (see Appendix Three).

Properties will be advertised for up to 7 days to allow local people to bid, as soon as the property becomes available, on any working day.

Applicants who are on the Housing Needs register will have access to housing through both routes. The Local Authorities will monitor the proportion of all homes that are allocated to applicants on the Housing Needs register. The aim is to enable two thirds of all homes to be allocated to applicants from the Housing Needs register.

SECTION 2: APPLYING TO JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER

Making an Application

Applicants aged 16+ can register an application by visiting the website www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk. Applicants should answer all questions in the form fully and accurately and be prepared to provide supporting evidence as required.

Applications will be assessed by an Assessing Partner based on the current address of the applicant.

All applicants eligible for social housing will be able to log onto the website immediately and bid on properties. Where applicants may be eligible for the Housing Needs register, the Assessing Partner will aim to assess the housing application and allocate a priority band within 10 working days of submission.

For homelessness applications, further checks may be required. Applicants will be informed if this is the case.

Information Required

Applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- Contact details of the current landlord, tenancy type and if a formal Notice To Quit has been served.
- Address history for the last 3 years including landlord details and reason for leaving.
- Details of anyone on the application who has unspent criminal convictions. Details of the crime, date and length of sentence given and how long they served will be required. (See Appendix Two for further details).
- Details of action taken against anyone on the application for Anti-Social Behaviour including type of action e.g. court action or written warning and if an ASB Order has been granted.

Please note, *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* will apply the suspension policy if appropriate (see section 4 for further details).

Documentation Requirements

The table below identifies potential verification needs and associated documentation required.

Verification Need:	Documents required (one of the following must be provided)
The identification of the applicant and households	Birth Certificate Passport Immigration papers
Eligibility to register for social housing	Passport National Identity Paper Home Office documents Wage slips Proof of Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance Proof of local connection
Proof of address and agreement terms, for example, tenancy agreement	Electoral Register entry Proof of rent payments Utility bills Pension book Confirmation from employer or DWP Tenancy Agreement Full driving licence Council Tax or telephone bill (recent) Bank statement (recent)
Proof of childcare responsibilities (Children who have previously been in the care of another person, including ex partner, must provide a combination of the evidence if a Residents Order is not available).	Child benefit or other benefits such as fostering allowance Residence Order Confirmation from Public Body (DWP, Social Services, Health & Education Authorities) Dependents birth certificate
Non-dependants verification for living with applicant	Confirmation from Social Services or other relevant statutory agency
Proof of pregnancy	Antenatal card/book Doctors letter MATB1
Threatened with eviction	Tenancy Agreement Valid Notice to Quit Court order

If an applicant is unable to provide the necessary documentation the case will be considered in light of individual circumstances by the relevant Partner Organisation. All offers are subject to verification.

Application Date and Effective Date

All applications will be given an 'Application Date' corresponding to the date the application was received for assessment.

Within each band, applicants order is listed by the 'Effective Date'. The 'Effective Date' is the date of application, or where an applicant's circumstances have changed and resulted in a higher band being awarded, the 'Effective Date' will be the date from which the higher band applies.

Online Security

Upon registration applicants will be issued with a registration number and memorable date to enable login for the service. Password resets can be requested via the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* website. Password reset/reminder information will be sent to the main applicants e-mail address. For this reason it is important that all applicants provide their own e-mail address.

Pre-tenancy Checks

Once an offer of accommodation is made, individual landlords may undertake relevant verification of their identity, circumstances and housing conditions. This may be in the form of an online application, interview, home visit and/or telephone call.

Evidence of outstanding housing debts will be verified. Where applicants have indicated anti-social behaviour and 'unspent' convictions, relevant checks will be made.

Landlord references (current/previous) will be sought where the applicant has held a private or social housing tenant. A credit check may also be carried out.

All applicants may be required to provide the following documents:

- Proof of identity and residence for all persons included on the application, including but not limited to: passport, identity card, phot driving licence, birth certificate or written confirmation from a professional person or support agency
- Proof that they are still an eligible person
- Proof of current address
- Proof of income
- Other documentation as appropriate

Offers may be withdrawn from an applicant who does not participate in pre-tenancy checks within a reasonable timescale.

References

Applicants will be required to provide two references to the Partner Organisation once they have successfully bid for a property. One reference must be from a current or the most recent landlord and may include a staff reference from interim or supported accommodation.

References will also be considered from the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Successful completion of a recognised tenancy training programme
- Current/former employer
- Teacher/College Lecturer
- Person of standing in the community.

References will not be accepted from family or friends. Further landlord references may be requested as required. Partner Organisations will review applications with unsatisfactory references.

Advice and Information

The Fylde Coast Local Authorities provide free independent housing advice to residents in their district. Partner Organisations to the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* scheme will ensure information and advice is available for applicants who need support to join or use the scheme, including a copy of the Consistent Assessment Policy.

False Information

Partner Organisations are committed to taking legal action against any applicant found to have gained a tenancy based on false information in their application form. (See section 4 – False Information for further details.

Data Sharing

Information provided in the application form will be made available to all partners of the Choice Based Lettings scheme. All supporting documentation will be scanned by relevant partners and electronically attached to the on-line application.

Data Protection

Information provided as part of the application process will be treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with current data protection legislation. Information will be held on a computerised database and will only be accessible by Partner Organisations. The data provided will be used to assess an applicant's eligibility for social housing and identify if there are additional support needs, enabling Registered Providers to rehouse applicants into appropriate accommodation. Where necessary, information will be shared with agencies providing housing related support.

Partner Organisations reserve the right to validate applicant information with appropriate organisations including the Police, Local Authorities, Employers, Probation Services, Former/Current Landlords, Banks and Building Societies, Health Professionals, Social Services and Credit Reference Agencies. Consent is sought via the Declaration on the application form.

Individuals are entitled under the Data Protection Act to request details of their personal data held by *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* for which a charge may apply.

The information received from housing applications may also be used for housing management and research purposes.

SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY TO JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER

Eligibility

Applicants aged 16 and over are eligible to apply to the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* Housing Register unless they are in one of the excluded groups below (See section 8 for 16 & 17 year olds).

Ineligibility (Non qualifying persons)

There are a number of circumstances in which applicants will be ineligible from joining the Housing Register:

1. Persons from abroad who the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government has deemed ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation
2. A person who, although not subject to immigration control, are not habitually (permanently) resident in the Common Travel Area (which includes the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland.)

These exclusions do not apply to existing social housing tenants where accommodation was allocated by the Local Authority.

There are a number of other circumstances in which applicants will be ineligible from joining the Housing Register.

3. Existing social housing tenants who apply with no housing need and who do not have permanent employment within the Fylde Coast area. (See Appendix Three – Working Households)
4. Applicants with no local connection (other than those exempt due to having served in the armed forces in the last five years or who are currently serving, and homeless applicants where a statutory duty to rehouse has been accepted by either Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council).
5. Households whose gross household income exceeds £60,000 pa
6. Applicants and households aged under 55 with savings exceeding £30,000
7. Households who have been evicted for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within the last five years
8. Households evicted from an Assured or Secure Tenancy from a Registered Provider, or evicted under section 8 of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from a private landlord.

There is a right of review for each decision made by *the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* partners on a case by case basis, having regard for exceptional circumstances. (See section 11 – Requesting a Review for further details).

Local Connection

When deciding eligibility, applicants must be able to demonstrate they have a local connection by one of the following:

- Local residency – they have lived in the Fylde Coast area consecutively for the last three years (does not include those that have been placed in the area)
- Permanent employment in the Fylde Coast area (see Appendix Three – Working Households)
- Close family association – has a parent, adult child, adult brother or sister who is living in the Fylde Coast area and has done so for the last 5 years
- Applicants who are serving in the Armed Forces and who are either employed or are resident in the Fylde Coast area
- Former Armed Forces personnel who had a previous residence in the Fylde Coast area as a result of a former posting to the area, within the last 5 years
- Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council

SECTION 4: APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

Each application is assessed in line with criteria and will either be:

1. Identified as ‘no housing need’ (no banding) due to:
 - Being adequately housed
 - Not meeting criteria within the housing need bands
 - Awaiting decision on a homeless application or further eligibility checks
 - Being an armed forces personnel currently serving or have served in the last five years who cannot demonstrate local connection

2. Placed on the ‘Housing Needs’ register and awarded a priority band.
MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast uses a banding scheme to prioritise applications: A, B and C

Priority Bands

Applicants eligible for the ‘Housing Needs’ register will be placed in one of three priority bands depending upon the information provided on their housing application:

Housing Needs Register	Criteria for each band
<p>Band A</p>	<p>Homeless applicants with a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Applicants with a local connection and at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A vulnerable person , who faces imminent discharge from hospital or temporary residential care and for whom there is no suitable accommodation to return to ▪ Applicants in exceptional circumstances including those in immediate danger of violence (at discretion)
<p>Band B</p>	<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disrepair in current property with identified Category 1 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action. ▪ Existing social housing tenant of a Partner Organisation who requires the property to be demolished or vacated. ▪ Under occupancy of a property owned by a Partner Organisation (applicable after the start of a tenancy)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adapted property, owned by a Partner Organisation, no longer required ▪ Urgent medical or disability, exacerbated due to current property conditions, with a medical assessment supporting the applicants (including household members) need to be rehoused. ▪ Armed forces personnel, currently serving or have served in the last 5 years (who meet at least one criteria from Band C) ▪ Urgent social or welfare needs, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Admission into residential care or hospital if applicant is not rehoused ○ A dependent (under 16) will be accommodated by the Local Authority unless the applicant is rehoused into a suitable property. ○ The need to give or receive essential care and support ▪ At risk of serious harm in present accommodation, for example, domestic abuse, hate crime, anti social behaviour or witnesses of crime. ▪ Threatened with homelessness, or owed the initial homelessness statutory duty by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council. ▪ Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of at least two additional bedrooms. ▪ Leaving Local Authority Care, with appropriate tenancy support, where there is a statutory duty under the Leaving Care Act 2000 to provide. ▪ Rough Sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping who are supported and referred by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Local Authority Housing Teams. ▪ Leaving supported housing or rehabilitation accommodation and are ready for independent living with tenancy support (if required) in place.
<p>Band C</p>	<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medical or disability conditions (with no detrimental impact) with a medical assessment supporting the applicants need to be rehoused. ▪ Social or Welfare needs, for example, applicant requires to be rehoused to a particular area to avoid hardship to themselves or others. ▪ Disrepair in current property with identified Category 2 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action. ▪ Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of one additional bedroom. ▪ Homeless with no priority need and no statutory duty owed by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council ▪ In supported or rehabilitation accommodation and not ready for independent living and no tenancy support in place.

- Armed forces personnel currently serving or have served in the last five years.

Property sizes

The numbers of bedrooms which applicants need is determined by the size of the household and in line with DWP regulations. As there is a shortage of larger homes, applicants are advised to consider a property that has two living rooms where one can reasonably be used as a bedroom.

The number of bedrooms needed is calculated as one bedroom for:

- Every adult couple
- Any other person aged 16 or over
- Any two children of the same sex
- Any two children regardless of sex under age 10
- Any other child

Applicants will be permitted to bid for a property in accordance with their calculated need and also for properties with one bedroom more than their calculated need. But letting of properties that are larger than an applicant's calculated need will be subject to affordability and pre-tenancy checks.

Providers may advertise some properties that are in short supply, such as large houses, as only being available to applicants whose calculated need is the same as the size of the property.

Expectant Mothers

Consideration will be given for unborn children in terms of bedroom entitlement but priority will only be awarded according to the current household needs.

Following the birth, and receipt of a birth certificate/s, a re-assessment will be made. It is the applicants responsibility to notify the assessing partner in order to update their circumstances.

Home Visits

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to carry out a home visit. Home visits can be used for, but not limited to:

- As part of application verification
- As part of pre-tenancy checks
- Where clarification is required

Applicants are expected to allow the visiting officer access to all parts of their home. If a *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* Partner Organisation is unable to complete a home visit the applicant may be removed from the scheme.

Relationship to Interested Parties

Partner organisations will apply relevant procedures to ensure there are no conflict of interests.

False Information

It is a criminal offence for housing applicants to knowingly give false information or withhold information relevant to their application. An offence is also committed if an applicant allows a third party to provide false information on their behalf.

Ground 5 in schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by s.146 of the 1996 Act) enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting at the tenants instigations.

Applicants who have provided false or misleading information on their application will be suspended from the Housing Register.

Before a decision is made on whether an applicant is suspended from the housing register under this criteria, applicants will be contacted and given the opportunity to provide details of mitigating circumstances within 8 weeks. If the information is not provided then a decision will be made based on the information available.

Applicants who are suspended from the Housing Register under this criteria will notified in writing. All Partner Organisations are committed to taking legal action against applicants found to have gained a tenancy based on false information in their application form.

Notification of Change in Circumstances

Applicants are responsible for notifying *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* with changes to personal circumstances. Existing applicants will be reassessed and placed in the appropriate band. Where an applicant is awarded a higher priority band the 'Effective Date' will be the date *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* were notified of these changes.

In circumstances were a reassessment results in a lower priority band the 'Effective Date' will remain the same as the 'Application Date'.

Application Checks

Application details will be checked regularly. Applicants may receive a renewal letter requesting confirmation of their registered details and will be required to respond within 28 days. Applications will be cancelled if no response is received and will only be reinstated in exceptional circumstances. Checks will be made at the time of a housing offer to ensure the property has been allocated appropriately. Housing offers will be withdrawn if an applicant's current housing situation differs from their registered details. An application may be suspended until appropriate documentation has been reviewed.

Applicants who Fail to Bid

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast may contact applicants who have not taken part in the bidding process. Depending on their individual circumstances the application may be reassessed or cancelled. Where necessary, additional support will be put in place.

Cancelling Applications

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast will cancel applications under the following circumstances:

- At the request of an applicant
- An applicant does not respond to a renewal letter within the specified time limit
- The applicant has been housed by *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* partners
- An applicant completes a mutual exchange
- An applicant does not maintain their application through the renewal process, or where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address
- The applicant has deceased
- Requested information has not been provided within the specified timescale.
- An applicant becomes ineligible for housing as defined by this policy.

Applicants can request a review should their application be cancelled - see section 11 for further details.

Where an applicant applies to re-join *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* their new date of application will correspond to the date they reapplied.

Suspensions

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast may suspend applications from the Housing Register for a maximum of 5 years. Suspended applications will remain 'held' on the system and applicants will no longer be able to bid for properties.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the reasons for suspension, the timescale and details on how to appeal the decision.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the Assessing Partner at the end of the suspension period to request a review of their application. The review will seek to establish if the reason for the suspension has been resolved satisfactorily, or if there is evidence of an improvement in the behaviour of the applicant(s) over a sustained period.

There is a right to review for each decision made by *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* partners on a case by case basis having regard for exceptional circumstances. (See section 11 – Requesting a Review/Appeal and section 3 for Ineligible Applicants)

Suspension Criteria

Suspension may apply where the applicants or any member of the household:

- Owes rent arrears or any other housing related debt, excluding Council Tax, to a landlord and has not made and maintained a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt (see section 4 – Debt)
- Has deliberately or negligently caused damage to a property belonging to a Partner Organisation or any other landlord, whether they are the tenant of that property or not
- Has made false or misleading statements (see section 4 – false information)
- Has engaged in anti-social behaviour (whether or not they were at the time a tenant of a Local Housing Authority or Registered Provider) and has not maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address their behaviour (see section 4 - Anti Social Behaviour)

- Is a current tenant of a participating landlord of the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast scheme (or another Registered Provider) and is, or has been, the subject of an action for breach of tenancy.
- Has been convicted of using their home, or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes (see Appendix Two – Convictions)

Other applications may be inactive on the system and therefore unable to bid:

- *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* is waiting for more information about an applicant's circumstances. (The application will remain held until all relevant information has been provided)
- Offenders in custody, the application will remain held until 28 days before their release date

Anti-Social Behaviour

The meaning of anti social behaviour for the purpose of this policy encompasses a past action or activity on the part of an applicant but also an omission, failure to act, passivity or inactivity. This extends to any past or present member of the household.

Suspension will be considered for acts of anti-social behaviour that occurred within the last 2 years. Evidence of acts of anti-social behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours, visitors or the community
- Being violent towards a partner or family member
- Allowing the condition of a rented property to deteriorate
- Damaging/destroying or disposing of furniture provided by the landlord
- Paying money illegally to obtain a social housing tenancy.

Suspension will also be considered regardless of time of occurrence in the following circumstances:

- A current Probation risk assessment level of Medium or above
- A current ASBO/CRASBO in place
- Conviction for a serious unspent criminal offence

Suspensions for cases of ASB will be between 12months to 5 years. Partner Organisations may use Starter Tenancies or Introductory Tenancies to manage and reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour.

Debt

Applicants with housing related arrears, such as rent arrears, below £500 owed to a landlord (including Partner Organisations) are subject to the terms of a repayment plan, for example, a minimum of 12 consecutive payments or a large payment to reduce the debt value. An offer of accommodation will only be made if these terms are met unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Applicants with arrears of over £500 will usually be suspended. A number of factors will be taken into consideration when agreeing the terms of a repayment plan and the length of the suspension. These decisions will be reviewed by the Senior Officer Decision Panel which is made up of members from Partner Organisations to ensure consistency.

Debt owed to private sector landlords (arrears and/or damage) will only be taken into account if an unsatisfactory reference is received.

SECTION 5: ADVERTISING AND APPLYING FOR PROPERTIES

When Properties will be Advertised

The Fylde Coast Local Authorities and Partner Organisations will advertise available properties on *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* website. Properties may be uploaded at any time. Customers will need to register their bids for properties that they are interested in.

Properties available only to applicants on the Housing Needs register will be advertised for a minimum of 7 days. Properties available to all applicants will be advertised for up to 7 days, with advertising ending once a valid bid has been received from someone with a connection to the relevant borough.

Property Descriptions

Properties advertised will carry (where possible) a photograph and a full description. As a minimum the description will include:

- Type of property
- Number of bedrooms
- Location of property
- Any adaptations (e.g. disabled facilities)
- Services provided (e.g. support, caretaker, cleaning)
- Heating type
- Energy Performance Certificate rating
- Rent charges and any service charges
- Eligibility criteria

Local Lettings

The partners have the discretion to apply local lettings policies where there are specific issues. Local lettings policies can also assist in the management of existing stock to help resolve issues such as child density, anti-social behaviour, mixed communities and worklessness. It should be noted that local lettings policies may be required on affordable new build sites. There may also be planning restrictions and local lettings policies which apply to specific properties such as a Section 106.

APPLYING (BIDDING) FOR PROPERTIES

Under the *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* scheme applicants are required to actively engage with the process of obtaining a new home. Applicants are advised to bid regularly for properties they would be willing to accept. Letting properties in this way means applicants are considered for homes they express an interest in giving them a greater choice over property location and type.

Bids can be made by visiting the website www.myhomechoicefyldecoast.co.uk. Applicants should only bid for properties they are eligible for which meets their housing needs.

SECTION 6: ALLOCATING PROPERTIES

Selection Process

The demand for social housing exceeds supply. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritise applications on the Housing Register to ensure housing stock is allocated appropriately.

Properties Reserved for Applicants on the Housing Needs Register

Shortlisting will be based on bids from applicants with a connection to the local borough and with the highest priority band. If bids are received from applicants in the same priority band, then the person with the longest Effective Date will be offered the property.

Where a property is adapted for use by a disabled person, it will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority band whose needs best match the facilities of the advertised property.

If there are no bids from applicants with a connection to the local borough, Partner Organisations will give consideration to applicants from other Fylde Coast areas.

Bids will not normally be considered if an applicant's or their household does not meet the size, age or disability requirements for the property unless there are exceptional circumstances or local lettings arrangements.

For Properties Open to all Applicants:

Applicants expressing an interest in these properties will be shortlisted in order of connection to the local borough, and when the bid was placed, with preference given to the earliest bids. Any bids that do not meet the criteria may be bypassed.

Pre-tenancy Checks

Once an offer of accommodation is made, individual landlords will undertake relevant verification of household member's identity, circumstances and housing conditions. This may take the form of an online form, interview, home visit and/or telephone call.

Evidence of anti-social behaviour and outstanding housing debts will be checked and will include checks where applicants have indicated an 'unspent' conviction.

Landlord references (current/previous) will be sought where the applicant has held a private or social housing tenancy. A credit check may also be carried out.

All applicants and household members may be required to provide the following documents:

- Proof of identity and residence for all persons included on the application; acceptable proof of identity is:
 - i. Passport
 - ii. Identity card (issued to certain foreign nationals)
 - iii. Photo driving licence²
 - iv. Birth certificate
 - v. Or written confirmation from a professional person or support agency

- Proof that they are eligible for social housing
- Proof of current address
- Proof of income
- Other documentation as appropriate

Offers may be withdrawn from an applicant who does not participate in pre-tenancy checks within a reasonable timescale.

The applicant to be offered the property will be contacted to verify their circumstances. Providing the applicant is eligible and suitable for the property (and in case of applicants on the Housing Needs register, that the applicant's priority has not changed), a provisional offer of the property will be made and a viewing arranged.

If the applicant refuses the property then it will be offered to the next applicant on the shortlist.

Refusal Following a Bid

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast will offer assistance and guidance to all applicants to help them through the application, bidding, viewing and sign up process.

Where an applicant has successfully bid for a property and then refuses it, generally no penalty will apply. In most cases, the applicant will be free to bid again.

Where an applicant does not keep an appointment to view a property, or refuses it, the next highest-ranking bidder will normally be offered the property.

Feedback on Successful Bids

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast will publish details on the number of bids received for each property and details of the successful applicant's band and Effective Date. This will help applicants determine their prospects of success in obtaining housing.

Withdrawal of Offers

An applicant dissatisfied with the withdrawal of an offer (or refusal to make an offer), may register a complaint following the relevant Partner Organisations complaints process. The property in question will not be 'held' whilst the review takes place and will be offered to the next successful applicant. If the original decision is not upheld, the applicant will be offered the next suitable property of their choice. In certain circumstances a Partner Organisation may make the applicant a Direct Offer.

SECTION 7: OTHER LETTING ARRANGEMENTS

Properties not Advertised

In exceptional circumstances *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* may allocate properties directly. Examples include:

- Tenants who need to be decanted
- Specially adapted properties
- Extra care vacancies
- Applicants who have succeeded a tenancy but need to move to alternative accommodation
- Emergency management transfers, where there is a severe risk of harm (*one offer in line with the policy will be made*)
- Multi Agency Public Protection Panel cases
- Homeless households owed a main duty by the Fylde Coast Local Authorities under S.193 of the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). One offer, in line with the policy will be made.
- Witness protection cases where a referral has been received directly from the Home Office. Referrals received directly from the Police will be processed under the normal allocation policy.
- Assisting the Fylde Coast Local Authorities in relation to Homelessness Duties.

Refusals of Direct Lettings

Applicants are required to give their reasons for refusing a property. An investigation will take place to establish the reasonableness of the offer, if necessary, relevant officers/professionals will be consulted. Applicants will be informed in writing if the investigation concludes the property offer was reasonable. Impact to their rehousing application and the right to request a review will also be detailed (see section 11).

If the investigation concludes the property offer was unreasonable, it will be withdrawn with no consequences to the applicant.

Successions and Assignments

When an introductory or secure tenant has deceased, a member of the family living with them at the time of their death may have a right to succeed the tenancy. Where no family member has such succession rights but a member of the household has:

- a) Been living with the tenant for 12 months prior to the tenants death; or
- b) Accepted responsibility for the tenants dependants

then the social housing provider has discretion to grant an introductory tenancy to that person either in the same home or in suitable accommodation.

An introductory or secure tenant may be able to assign the tenancy to someone else so long as the tenancy has not already been passed on by assignment, or succession. It is usually assigned:

- By a court order following matrimonial /civil partnership breakdown or family proceedings;
OR
- To a member of the tenant's family who would qualify to succeed the tenancy if the tenant had deceased.

Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is where two tenants with Secure and Assured tenancies are in agreement to swap their properties in their current condition, including tenancies. Written permission must be obtained from the landlord prior to an exchange.

Requests will be processed by the relevant Partner Organisation and in certain circumstances can be refused, for example, action is being taken to repossess the property (Suspended Possession Order or Notice of Seeking Possession) or properties will be under/over occupied.

Transfer Policy

Existing tenants of Partner Organisations have the right to apply for a transfer, subject to being in housing need/permanent employment, and any restrictions that apply to their tenancy. Applications for transfers will be processed in the same way as a new application. Tenants' housing needs will be assessed and awarded appropriate banding.

To qualify, tenants must allow access for property inspections, viewings and sign ups. Properties must also be left in a good state of repair and in decorative order. Tenants with rent arrears or other breaches of their tenancy agreement may be suspended from the scheme (see section 4- Suspensions)

Partner Organisation may need to carry out emergency or management moves. These properties will not be advertised but recorded on the system for auditing and reporting purposes. (see section 10 – Properties not Advertised)

Joint Tenancies

Where there is a joint tenancy, both tenants are jointly and individually responsible for ensuring the tenancy agreement is adhered to.

Both parties to a joint tenancy must individually qualify to join *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* and be eligible for an offer, or to bid on a property. If a joint tenancy is refused by a Partner Organisations, a clear reason will be provided to the applicants in writing. Applicants can request a review of the decision if required (see section 11 – Requesting a Review). When one of the joint tenants gives notice to the relevant Partner Organisation, discretion may be used when deciding to offer the property, or an alternative property, as sole tenancy to the other joint tenant.

In certain circumstances joint tenancies may be granted to more than two people.

SECTION 8: DEFINITIONS

Support in Accommodation

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast Partner Organisations work closely with relevant health and social care bodies to identify opportunities to rehouse residents, in receipt of adequate care and support, into appropriate accommodation.

Where support packages are not immediately available, Partner Organisations reserve the right to withhold an offer of accommodation until appropriate arrangements are in place and agreed by the applicant.

The above is dependent on the availability of suitable and appropriate accommodation.

Supported Accommodation

Applicants residing in supported accommodation or rehabilitation will not be awarded priority Band B until they are ready for independent living and/or tenancy support is in place (if required).

Sheltered Housing or Independent Living

Sheltered Housing or Independent Living is normally for people aged 55+. These schemes are designed for applicants who are able to live independently (including those in receipt of a care package) but would benefit from the security of an alarm system and low level support from staff.

A single applicant or both joint applicants aged 55+ will automatically be eligible for Sheltered / Independent Living properties. Consideration will be given to applicants aged below 55 with an illness, disability or vulnerability.

Sheltered Housing applicants will not be listed separately on the Housing Register, but will be assessed in accordance with their housing need and placed within the appropriate band.

Extra Care

Extra Care housing is a form of specialised housing for adults with 'higher' levels of care and support needs. These schemes are equipped with facilities and services to aid independent living. There are a small number of extra care schemes within the Fylde Coast Region.

Adapted Properties and Ground Floor Accommodation

Adapted properties are fitted with equipment to aid independent living for a person with an illness or disability. Applications will automatically be registered for suitably adapted properties in accordance with identified need and placed in the appropriate band. An Occupational Therapy assessment may be required prior to an offer being made.

Applicants with an illness or disability will automatically be considered for ground floor accommodation.

Allocations for these types of properties will be prioritised to those with the appropriate need.

16 & 17 year olds

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast is open to applicants aged 16 and 17 years of age. An offer of a tenancy will usually be delayed until the age of 18 unless there is a statutory duty to house the applicant earlier. For example, the applicant is:

- Leaving care
- Pregnant or already has a child/children
- Homeless and owed a main duty under s.193 of the Housing Act 1996 (part VII) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Residing in supported accommodation and ready for independent living, as agreed by the support provider and where necessary appropriate tenancy support is in place

Applicants who fall in the above categories may need to provide details of a guarantor (professional person, parent or responsible adult) prior to being offered a tenancy.

Applicants will be considered for a tenancy on the condition they accept support to sustain their tenancy agreement.

Offenders

Offenders may apply to the Housing Register whilst in custody, or submit a change of address form if they are a current applicant prior to committal. The application will remain inactive, however, the applicant will accrue waiting time on the list. When the application is made live the original date of application will be the effective date.

Applications will remain inactive until 28 days prior to the offender being released from prison, unless any of the suspension criteria apply.

Offenders will be assessed in line with the service level agreement between Lancashire Probation Trust and each the Fylde Coast Local Authorities.

Rough Sleepers

Applicants who are rough sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping will be awarded appropriate priority once their information has been verified. This is dependent on the applicant being supported and referred by the relevant Local Authority.

Mobile Homes/Caravans

Applicants will be considered to have a local connection if they live in a mobile home or caravan in the Fylde Coast area which is classed as their permanent residence and meet their other local connection criteria.

SECTION 9: HOMELESS APPLICANTS

The Local Authority has a duty to secure suitable accommodation for applicants who are accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 (part VII) (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011).

Applicants will be entered onto the Housing Register for four weeks and will have full choice of areas to live. However, after the four week period (calculated from the date of the decision to accept the applicant as homeless) suitable accommodation has not been found, the Local Authority may bid on the applicants behalf. Applicants will be offered the first suitable property except in extreme mitigating circumstances.

One Offer Policy

The Local Authorities duty will come to an end if a homeless applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation. Applicants will be informed in writing that the Local Authority has discharged their duty under section 193 of the above act. Dissatisfied applicants can request a review – see section 11 for further details.

SECTION 10: REQUESTING A REVIEW/APPEAL

Applicants can request a review of decisions made by *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* Partner Organisations for the following:

- Eligibility for entry on to the housing register
- Suspension or exclusion from the Housing Register
- The level of priority awarded
- Entitlement of the type and size of property required
- Removal of the applicant from the register other than at the applicants own request

Procedure

Requests for a review/appeal must be made within 21 days of the original notification and should include the applicant's reasons for believing the decision made was incorrect. It is at the discretion of Partner Organisations to extend the time if it considers it's reasonable to do so.

Requests can be made in the following ways and directed to the assessing Partner Organisation:

- In writing - by letter or email
- By telephone
- In person

How the Decision will be Reviewed

A senior officer of the Partner Organisation, not involved in the original decision, will review and determine if an error has occurred or deem it to be an exceptional circumstance. The decision will be based on known facts at the time of the review. The senior officer will request additional information if necessary.

Reviews will be responded to within eight weeks by the relevant Partner Organisation. Partner organisations have the discretion to extend the time if it considers it reasonable to do so.

Applicants will receive a letter providing the outcome of their review/appeal and where necessary, detail further actions to be taken with their application.

An applicant has the right to complain to the appropriate Ombudsman if they feel that they have been unfairly treated as a result of maladministration. Contact Details:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Complaints

Applicants with a complaint regarding the withdrawal/refusal to make an offer should follow the Partner Organisations complaints process – see section 6 for further details.

Applicants can also seek independent legal advice through a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

SECTION 11: MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE SCHEME

A number of outcomes within the scheme will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure the system is operating effectively.

Policy Review

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast's Consistent Assessment Policy will be regularly reviewed. Minor changes which do not significantly affect the spirit of the policy will be approved by a majority agreement amongst the partners.

Customers and relevant partners will be consulted on major changes to the policy. Approval will then be gained through the appropriate governance arrangements including Council members and RSL board members.

Unless there is a statutory requirement, Partner Organisations have the right to use discretion when allocating properties. There may be circumstances where a Partner Organisations decision supersedes this policy.

Equal Opportunities Statement

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast is committed to promoting equality, combating discrimination and promoting good community relations and will ensure that discrimination does not take place in the allocation of properties and services it provides.

There is a commitment to:

- Ensure our services and how they are delivered meet the diverse needs of local residents.
- Ensure our buildings are as accessible as possible.
- Provide information about our services in accessible formats, such as, large print, Braille or alternative languages.
- Promote inclusive communities that have a shared sense of belonging and pride in the Fylde Coast
- Challenge unfairness and discrimination
- Engage with the diverse communities of the Fylde Coast to ensure their needs are identified and met
- Value the important contribution the community and voluntary sector make to the Fylde Coast Region
- Work in partnership to share good practice and promote a consistent approach
- Value and train staff to deliver services fairly, efficiently and effectively
- Actively seek feedback to continually develop and improve our approach

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast will regularly review its practices, policies, staff training and monitoring arrangements to ensure applicants are treated fairly regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Partner Organisations have adopted corporate policies and action plans aimed at promoting equality and valuing diversity. Further local policies and action plans may be developed to address the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

Partner Organisations will conduct regular monitoring to ensure no group is unfairly disadvantaged.

Appendix 1: Qualifying persons and immigration chart.

Class of Applicant	Conditions of eligibility	How to identify/verify
Existing social tenant (allocation accommodation by LA)	None	
British Citizen	Must be habitually resident in the CTA	Passport
EEA Citizen	Must be habitually resident in CTA unless, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant is a ‘worker’ (3) • Applicant has a right to res the UK (4) 	Passport or national identity card
Person subject to immigration control granted refugee status	None	Stamp in passport or Home Office Letter
Person subject to immigration control granted indefinite leave to remain	Must be habitually resident in CTA and if ILR was granted on undertaking that a sponsor(s) would be responsible for maintenance & accommodation and 5 years have not elapsed since date of entry to UK or undertaking – then at least one sponsor must have died	Stamp in passport of Home Office
Person subject to immigration control who is a citizen of a country that has ratified ECSMA (3) or ESC (6)	Must be lawfully present (3) in UK Must be habitually resident in CTA	Passport

1. CTA: the Common travel area includes the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland
2. EEA countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom
3. A ‘worker’ for the purpose of the Council Regulation (EEC) no. 1612/68 or (EEC) No. 1251/70
4. A right to reside pursuant to Council Directive No.68360EEC or No.73/148/EEC
5. ECSMA is the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance. Non EEA ratifying countries are: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.
6. ESC is the European Social Charter. Non EEA ratifying countries are: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Slovakia.
7. Persons subject to immigration control are not lawfully present in the UK unless they have leave to enter or remain in the UK. Asylum seekers are generally only granted “temporary admission” and do not have leave to enter or remain.

Appendix 2: How a conviction becomes spent.

The way in which a conviction can become 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will depend upon the sentence received for the offence and the rehabilitation period that applies to that offence sentence. The principles apply to convictions in a criminal court, findings in a juvenile court, certain offences in service disciplinary proceedings and hospital orders under the Mental Health Act 1983. The time required before the conviction is spent, the 'rehabilitation period', will be different depending upon the nature and length of the sentence, be it a term of imprisonment, a fine, a surcharge order, probation, or an absolute or conditional discharge. Relevant rehabilitation periods are set out below. Unless otherwise stated, the rehabilitation period runs from the date of the conviction and will generally depend upon compliance with the sentence.

Relevant rehabilitation periods

Prison for more than two and a half years – **Never**

Prison for more than six months but less than two and a half years - **10 years**

Youth custody* for more than six months but less than two and half year – **10 years**

*Corrective training for more than six months but less than two and a half years – **10 years**

*Dismissal with disgrace from her Majesty's service – **10 years**

* A sentence of Borstal training – **7 years**

Prison for six months or less – **7 years**

* Dismissal from Her Majesty's service – **7 years**

Imprisonment or detention in YOI or youth custody for six months or less – **7 years ***

Detention in respect of conviction in service disciplinary proceedings -**5 years ***

(Most) fines – **5 years ***

Youth offender detention for over six months but less than two and a half years – **5 years**

Probation order or community order (person 18 or older) – **5 years**

Probation order or community order (person under 18) – **Either 2 ½ years from conviction, or until the order ceases to have effect –whichever is longer**

Hospital order under the Mental Health Act 1983 – **Either 5 years, or 2 years after order ceases to have effect, whichever is longer**

Young offender detention for six months or less – **3 years**

Conditional discharge, binding over, care order, supervision order, reception order – **Either 1 year after making of order, or 1 year after the order ends, whichever is the longer**

Absolute discharge – **6 months**

Disqualification – **The period of disqualification**

Cautions, Warnings and Reprimands – **Spent as soon as they are issued**

Conditional cautions – **Spent as soon as conditions end**

APPENDIX 3: DEFINITION OF WORKING HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Working Households

Households where at least one applicant is in employment. For the purpose of this policy employment is described as;

- Over 16 hours per week (unless the remuneration is substantial)
- The main place of work is within the Fylde Coast area
- Offers of employment should be regular, intend to last for more than 12 months and there is a genuine intention to take up the offer of work

Appropriate evidence is provided which may include contract of employment, wage/salary slips, formal offer letter and tax and benefits information. – not sure where to include this point?

For applicants working outside the Fylde Coast, evidence will be required that their employment will continue.

It should be noted that this must be confirmed at point of application and evidenced at point of offer.

Community Contribution

Households where at least one applicant is undertaking voluntary work. For the purposes of policy, voluntary work (community contribution) is described as:

- Choosing to give your time to benefit others without being paid. For example, completing voluntary work in a charity, voluntary organisation or community group, public sector organisation (local council), a social enterprise or a local business
- The voluntary work must have been held for a minimum of 6 months prior to the application for the award in order to be eligible.

It is not volunteering if you help out a family member, are given money apart from expenses, or are under contract to do it (this does not include any volunteer agreement you may have).

It should be noted that this must be confirmed of application and evidenced at point of offer.

Exemptions

May include people who are able to demonstrate they are unable to work due to disability, age or gender.

Appendix 4: Armed Forces Personnel

References to “Armed Forces Personnel” include persons who meet the following criteria:

- i. is currently serving in the regular forces
- ii. formerly served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application for an allocation of housing
- iii. has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence 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
- iv. is serving or has served in the reserve forces within five years of their application for an allocation of housing and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person’s service.

The regular forces and the reserve forces are defined by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006(2) as follows:

- “the regular forces” means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force
- “the reserve forces” means the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force

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Date	Version	Amended by	Description of changes
23/4/13		Vikki Piper/Andrew Foot	Re-drafted following consultation
15/10/13		Vikki Piper/Alan Davis	Updated
17/10/13		Vikki Piper/Alan Davis/Paul Dillon/Pam Holroyd/Kirstine Riding	Updated
19/08/14		Vikki Piper/Lucy Wright	Minor amendments
July '17		Andy Foot/Kirstine Riding/David McArthur	Major changes for consultation
25/09/17		Andrew Foot	Amendments for consultation
October 2017		Andrew Foot/Tahira	Major changes for consultation
30 th October 2017		Vikki Piper/Kirstine Riding	Minor amendments
January 2018		Vikki Piper/Andrew Foot/Tahira Chohan	Minor amendments

Approved By:

Name	Title	Signature	Date

Revised February 2015

Department: **Places Directorate**

Team or Service Area Leading Assessment: **Housing Options/Housing Strategy**

Title of Policy/ Service or Function: **Consistent Assessment Policy – My HomeChoiceFyldeCoast**

Proposals to introduce/ alter/ delete policy, service, expenditure etc:

Date of proposals: _____ Committee/Team: **Housing**

Lead Officer: **Andrew Foot, Head of Housing**

STEP 1 - IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE OR AIMS

1. What type of policy, service or function is this?

Existing New/ proposed Changing/ updated

2. What is the aim and purpose of the policy, service or function?

There is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have an allocations scheme in place detailing how social housing stock is allocated. 'MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast' is a Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme operating across the Fylde Coast Local Authorities (Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre).

The Consistent Allocations Policy (CAP) underpins the scheme to unify the way Local Authorities within the Fylde Coast Region allocate social housing stock enabling residents a wider choice of housing. In drafting of this Policy, the legal provisions of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002) and the Localism Act (2011), together with the related Code of Guidance issued by the Government have been taken into consideration.

The CBL scheme has been adopted by the relevant elected members of each of the three Fylde Coast Local Authorities and key Registered Providers:

Blackpool Coastal Housing
Great Places Housing Group
Muir Group Housing Ltd
Progress Housing Group
Places for People
Regenda Group

All participating partners will advertise at least 50% of their empty properties via the CBL scheme. Applicants can apply for a property of their choice provided they meet the criteria.

3. Please outline any proposals being considered.

The CAP details how applicants for social housing are assessed and awarded priority, thus, supporting the operations of the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast letting scheme.

All homes will be advertised through the CBL scheme allowing 20% of empty properties to be prioritised to households who meet the working households and community contributions criteria.

The policy reflects changes within the local housing market and addresses the demand for social housing across the Fylde Coast Region. It promotes a fair and efficient mechanism for the allocations of social housing providing a greater choice for applicants.

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The schemes key objectives are to:

- Create a customer led Choice Based Lettings scheme
- Widen the choice of housing
- Ensure the scheme is open, fair and accountable
- Increase understanding and satisfaction of the letting system
- Give new tenants a feeling of ownership of their property and community
- Help create sustainable communities
- Make more efficient use of the available housing stock
- Help tackle low demand and reduce void turn around times
- Create a single point of access to all social housing on the Fylde Coast
- Meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in Part VI of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002) and the Localism Act (2011).

5. Who is the policy, service or function intended to help/ benefit?

The policy enables Blackpool Council to work collaboratively with other local authorities and key Registered Providers within the Fylde Coast Region providing a greater choice of housing for applicants.

This policy seeks to ensure that i) applicants housing needs are met, ii) social housing properties are utilised and allocated to those in most need and iii) to build strong stable communities.

The process has been simplified and household with a higher statutory need will be rehoused quicker.

6. Who are the main stakeholders/ customers/ communities of interest?

Residents looking to be rehoused within the Fylde Coast Region
 Blackpool Coastal Housing
 Great Places Housing Group
 Muir Group Housing Ltd
 Progress Housing Group
 Places for People
 Regenda Group
 Blackpool Council – Housing Options
 Fylde Council
 Wyre Council

7. Does the policy, service or function have any existing aims in relation to Equality/ Diversity or community cohesion?

The policy aims to develop a fair and efficient rehousing lettings system within the social housing sector, ensuring properties are allocated to those in greater housing need.

Property Information will be available enabling applicants to make informed decisions on the suitability of the home, thus, benefitting local communities as tenants will have chosen to live in the area.

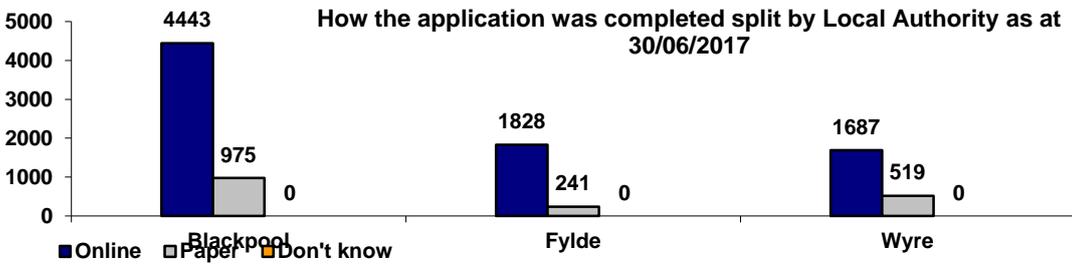
STEP 2 - CONSIDERING EXISTING INFORMATION AND WHAT THIS TELLS YOU

8. Please summarise the main data/ research and performance management information in the box below.

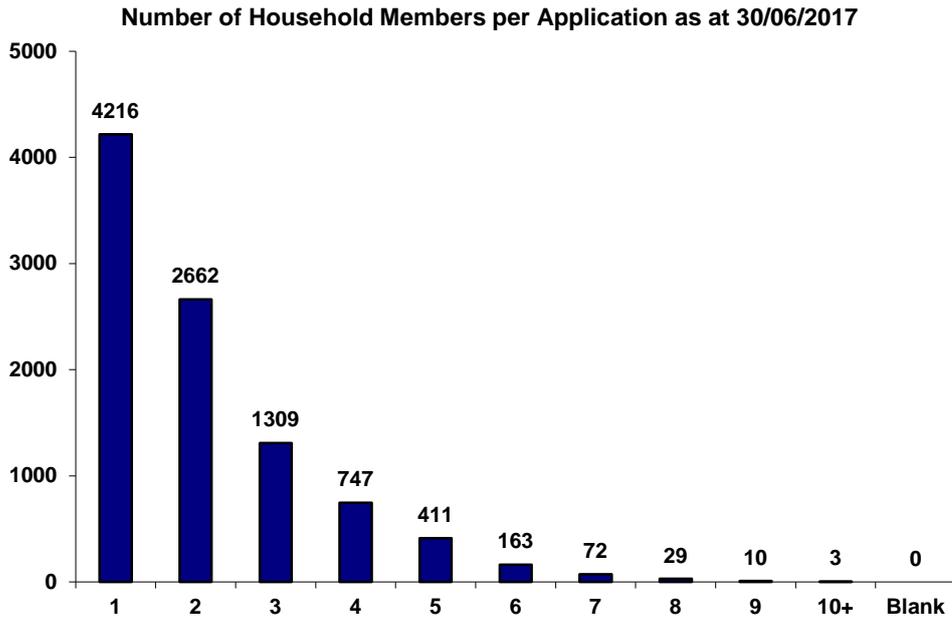
Data/ information

There are approximately 6400 active applicants on the current CBL system who may need to be reassessed as a result of the changes within the CAP policy.

82% if applications completed as at 30th June '17 were on-line, a breakdown by local authority is shown below:

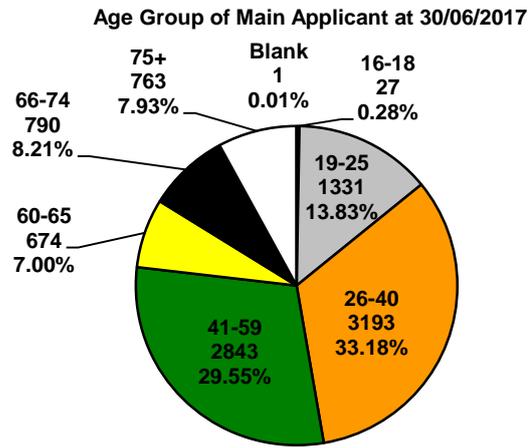


There are 4216 applicants with one person in the household, this equates to 65% of active applications requiring 1 bed properties (see below)

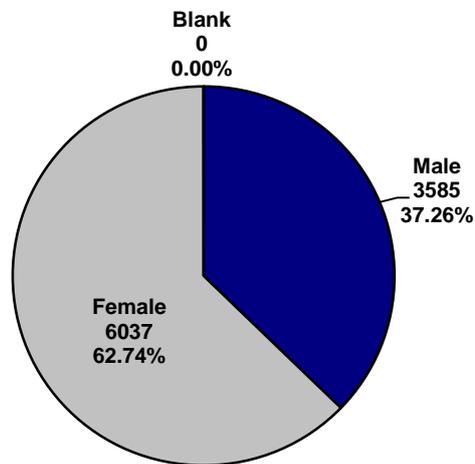


22% of active applicants are in employment. Fylde continues to have the greater percentage of employed applicants with Blackpool continuing to have the lowest.

A third of rehousing applicants are aged between 26-40. 62% of main applicants are female (see below)



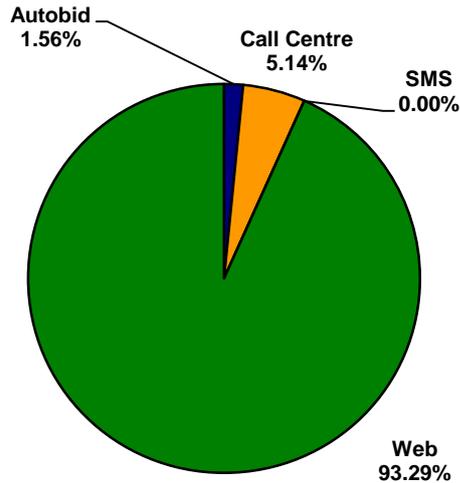
Gender of Main Applicant at 30/06/2017



Research or comparative information

Analysis of the current my home choice system shows that majority of applicants express their interests for a property on-line.

Source of Bids at 30/06/2017



The tables below provide an overview of the number of applicants placing bids:

Short Term Trend (Quarter on Quarter)

Local Authority	Q4	Q1	Trend
Blackpool	1281	1094	↓
Fylde	251	216	↓
Wyre	442	437	↓

Long Term Trend (Against Same Time Last Year)

Local Authority	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Blackpool	1126	1094	↓
Fylde	212	216	↑
Wyre	405	437	↑

27% of active applicants have placed bids. By quickening up the application process applicants will be able to complete an online application and be able to place bids immediately rather than having to wait for their application to be processed. Properties will also be advertised on a daily basis encouraging applicants to become more proactive when requiring housing.

Key findings of consultation and feedback

Consultation on the proposed changes to the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast policy took place between 8th November '17 – 18th December '17. 258 questionnaires in total were completed

(5.6% response rate). The headline results of the survey:

- 68% of respondents agree with the revised local connection requirements with 9% in disagreement.
- Just over half (51%) agree with the introduction of two ways of letting, 38% have no opinion or didn't know.
- 47% of respondents agree with how applicants are awarded a priority band with 33% not in agreement.
- 45% agree with the restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants. 23% disagreed, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Half of the respondents agree with the proposed priority for working applicants for some homes. 27% are in disagreement.
- More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents (83%) agree with giving more flexibility in the size of properties that applicants can bid for.
- 66% of respondents felt the proposed new arrangements will enable the local authority to make best use of the social housing stock in the area. 11% are in disagreement.
- 47% agree with the current income and savings threshold are correct. 27% of applicants neither agree nor disagree.

Whilst the majority of respondents are in agreement with the proposed changes, feedback from the consultation raised concerns regarding the banding and eligibility criteria. Some respondents felt the proposed changes would disadvantage applicants who are most in need and identified areas where the process can be simplified.

9. What are the impacts or effects for Key Protected Characteristics?

Age

The CAP sets out how applicants to the CBL scheme will be assessed. The assessment criterion takes applicants vulnerabilities into consideration and awards priority accordingly.

Monitoring data for the existing CBL scheme indicates that residents of all groups are using the system. Existing data shows the majority of CBL applications have been completed on-line (between October '16 - June '17) with 24% of main applicants aged 60+

The new policy operates in a similar way thus not disadvantaging residents due to their age. The partnership will continue using the same good practises and will be put procedures and safeguards in place to ensure support and assistance is available.

With the exception of supported housing (sheltered/extra care), the CBL scheme does not restrict the type of housing applicants can apply for based on their age.

Applicants aged 16 + are eligible to apply for re-housing and will be offered a tenancy at the age of 18 unless there is a statutory duty to house them earlier.
<i>Disability</i>
<p>The policy enables adapted homes and ground floor accommodation to be allocated to applicants with a medical need. Applicants will be assessed and registered for suitably adapted accommodation, including ground floor accommodation, in accordance with identified need and placed in the appropriate band.</p> <p>All partnership organisations will continue to offer residents support and assistance with completing application forms. Residents will have the option to set up proxy bidding to allow relatives, friends, support workers or housing staff to bid on their behalf.</p> <p>The simpler banding system may help to make the allocation process easier to understand for people with learning disabilities.</p>
<i>Gender Reassignment</i>
There is no evidence to suggest this policy will have a particular impact on this group.
<i>Marriage and Civil partnership</i>
There is no distinction made in the policy between people who are married or in civil partnership thus having no particular impact on this group.
<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>
Consideration will be given for unborn children in terms of bedroom entitlement.
<i>Race</i>
<p>Ethnic minorities make up a very small proportion of residents on the Fylde Coast. 85% of applicants on the Housing Register are White British.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest this policy will have a particular impact on this group.</p>
<i>Religion and Belief</i>
The policy does not discriminate on the basis of religion or belief. Applicants residing in mobile homes/caravans will be considered to have a local connection providing they live in the Fylde Coast area and meet other local connection criteria.
<i>Sex</i>
The policy awards priority banding to applicants in immediate danger of physical violence of which victims are usually women. The CBL partnership will enable

movement within the Fylde Coast area allowing an opportunity for victims to move away from the perpetrator.

The policy has adopted a broader definition of 'working households and community contributions' enabling applicants an opportunity to demonstrate they inability to work due to disability, age or gender.

Sexual Orientation

There is no evidence to suggest this policy will have a particular impact on this group.

10. What do you know about how the proposals could affect community cohesion?

The policy seeks to create a customer led choice based letting scheme, thus, promoting community cohesion. Properties will be advertised with adequate information enabling applicants to make informed decisions before expressing their interest.

11. What do you know about how the proposals could impact on levels of socio –economic inequality, in particular Poverty?

Properties advertised under the CBL scheme fall within the Affordable Housing category with rent levels at least 20% below the market rate.

STEP 3 - ANALYSING THE IMPACT

12. Is there any evidence of higher or lower take-up by any group or community, and if so, how is this explained?

There is no evidence of the policy significantly affecting any one group or community. The policy aims to deliver a fair and efficient mechanism for the allocation of social rented homes and awards priority to households who are most in need.

13. Do any rules or requirements prevent any groups or communities from using or accessing the service?

No, the CBL system is available to all residents looking for re-housing within the

social housing sector. Assistance is available within all three local authority areas for residents who require support with applications and the bidding process.

14. Does the way a service is delivered/ or the policy create any additional barriers for any groups of disabled people?

See section 9

15. Are any of these limitations or differences “substantial” and likely to amount to unlawful discrimination?

Yes No

If yes, please explain (referring to relevant legislation) in the box below

16. If No, do they amount to a differential impact, which should be addressed?

Yes No

If yes, please give details below.

STEP 4 - DEALING WITH ADVERSE OR UNLAWFUL IMPACT

17. What can be done to improve the policy, service, function or any proposals in order to reduce or remove any adverse impact or effects identified?

n/a

18. What would be needed to be able to do this? Are the resources likely to be available?

n/a

19. What other support or changes would be necessary to carry out these actions?

n/a

STEP 5 - CONSULTING THOSE AFFECTED FOR THEIR VIEWS

20. What feedback or responses have you received to the findings and possible courses of action?
Please give details below.

Consultation on the proposed changes to the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast policy took place between 8th November '17 – 18th December '17. See '**Key findings of consultation and feedback**' for results on key findings.

21. If you have not been able to carry out any consultation, please indicate below how you intend to test out your findings and recommended actions.

n/a

STEP 6 - ACTION PLANNING

Please outline your proposed action plan below.

Issues/ adverse impact identified	Proposed action/ objectives to deal with adverse impact	Targets/Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicate whether agreed
n/a					

Issues/ adverse impact identified	Proposed action/ objectives to deal with adverse impact	Targets/Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicate whether agreed

STEP 7 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND REVIEW

Please outline your arrangements for future monitoring and review below.

Agreed action	Monitoring arrangements	Timeframe	Responsibility	Added to Service Plan etc.
Review the allocation of social housing stock within the Fylde Coast Region		12 months	Fylde Coast Local Authorities	

Date completed:

Signed:

Name:

Position:

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIORNMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	8

FYLDE COAST HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TRAILBLAZER

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

DCLG Homeless Trailblazer Funding was awarded to the Fylde Coast Housing Authorities in December 2016 to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place. Fylde were awarded £120,000 (£60,000 2017/18 and £60,000 2018/19). This report provide statistical information on the outputs, outcomes and cost saving analysis from the Trailblazer project within Fylde.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Quarterly returns by local authorities on progress.

LINK TO INFORMATION

Report attached.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

Update on Year 1, Trailblazer project 2017/18

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Kirstine Riding 01253 658569

Fylde Coast Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

Fylde BC Statistical information, case studies and good practice –2017/2018

Trailblazer Outputs, outcomes and cost saving.

In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from DCLG. The aim of the funding was to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and work with a wider group of people and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place. Fylde were awarded £120,000 (£60,000 2017/18 and £60,000 2018/19).

1. Tenancy Support Worker

A tenancy Support Worker was appointed to support a case load of vulnerable tenants across all client groups who are at high risk of tenancy failure to maximise their independence and minimise the risk of tenancy breakdown within both the social and rented sectors and the homeless. The role delivers a support service and coordinating packages of support for customers with complex needs such as mental health, drug or alcohol misuse issues, offenders and rough sleepers. Since June 2017 the post has dealt with 75 complex needs clients presenting with either drug, alcohol, mental health, history of offending, rough sleeping and failed tenancies.

Additional charitable funding of £9,946 has been sourced to allow tenancies to be established and given a chance to become sustainable to provide match funding to support the Local Authority's Invest to Save fund for Rent in Advance or Rent Bond into the private rented sector, furniture, electrical goods and essential home packages.

COMPLEX NEEDS TENANCY SUPPORT WORKER

2017/18	Referrals made	Outcomes
Qtr 1	Post started 01/06/2017	
Qtr 2	32	Homelessness Prevented 5 Evictions prevented 8 Reduced requirement for temporary accommodation 5 Reduced rough sleeping 2 Clients found employment 2 On-going support 3
Qtr 3	18	Homelessness Prevented 2 Evictions prevented 0 Reduced requirement for temporary accommodation 1 Reduced rough sleeping 3 Clients found employment 0 On-going support 11 No contact 1
Qtr 4	25	Homelessness Prevented 7 Evictions prevented 0 Reduced requirement for temporary accommodation 1 Reduced rough sleeping 3 Clients found employment 0 On-going support 11 No contact 3

2. Housing Options Customer Services Specialist

A post was established within the Customer Services Team to provide a first point of contact, information and advice on Housing Options in respect of Fylde BC Homelessness, Housing Advice and Private Sector services, in a professional and courteous manner. During the last 3 quarters of 2017/18 this post has assisted and signposted 326 clients.

Customer Services Housing Specialist enquiries from 29/06/2018	326 enquiries dealt with. Housing Benefit forms Discretionary Housing Payments MyHomeChoice applications Invest to Save applications Fact finding of initial housing enquiry Signposting to support agencies
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3. Tenancy Training

A Tenancy Training Service was already established within Fylde and the Trailblazer funding has been used to continue this service and develop an e-learning module for working households facing homelessness. A certificate of completion of the course is required before Housing Services will provide funding for either a rent in advance or bond payment to enter a private sector tenancy. During 2017/18, 20 clients have completed this course by attending sit down sessions and a further 9 have completed the e-learning module.

2017/18	Referrals made	Outcomes
Qtr 1	17	Engaging groups – 1 Course complete – 6 Never attended – 7 E learning complete - 3 Engaging e learning – 0
Qtr 2	21	Engaging groups – 13 Course complete – 3 Never attended – 1 Engaging on-line – 3 On-hold - 1
Qtr 3	18	Engaging groups – 3 Course complete – 6 Never attended – 4 E learning complete - 4 Engaging e learning – 1
Qtr 4	16	Engaging groups – 1 Course complete – 5 Never attended – 4 E learning complete - 2 Engaging e learning – 4

4. Smile Mediation

A 12 month trail was undertaken of Smile Mediation Services across Community Safety, Environmental Health Services and Housing Services with a purpose to prevent the causes of homelessness, for example landlord disputes and anti-social behaviour and provide individual mediation where individuals or households are struggling to engage with support services available to understand the barriers preventing engagement. The Community Safety Partnership provided a contribution of £3,000 towards the total costs of £6,000 for 100 units of mediation support. Training was provided for staff using the service to develop their skills in recognising when mediation could provide a solution and referring into the service.

During 17/18 only 2 cases were referred into the service. The main reasons for refusal by clients was an unwillingness to engage with mediation as an approach to resolve conflict. A decision was made to not continue the service into the second year of the Trailblazer project. This service will still be offered routinely when staff feel mediation could be a possible way forward to resolve conflict.

5. Cost savings

As part of the submission for funding to DCLG the Fylde Coast Authorities were asked to estimate the savings per case from additional support available from the Trailblazer funding. The savings per case come from the New Economy unit cost table V.1.4 updated in 2015.

<http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis/unit-cost-database>

Temporary Accommodation costs assume that on average, people accessing temporary accommodation will stay there for 3 months before permanent accommodation is found, in line with current trends in the Fylde Coast. The eviction costs used are for simple, uncomplicated evictions.

Table 1, overleaf provides cost saving information across the Fylde Coast authorities from the new measures brought in and Table 2 cost saving in Fylde as a result of the Homeless Trailblazer funding with an emphasis on prevention, and better services for people with multiple and complex needs including rough sleepers.

No further benefits were included that could not be easily quantified, but it is expected that in reality there would be significant further benefits to Health services and Police costs resulting from homelessness being prevented and individuals supported in more stable accommodation.

The analysis is based on the number of clients and the cost saving from the outcome of the support provided.

Across a range of services provided by Fylde Coast Authorities the cost saving analysis estimates a saving of £570,037 from the additional Trailblazer projects and within Fylde the cost saving estimates £156,964.

Table 1 – Complex Needs cost saving analysis Fylde Coast Authorities

Type of Cost saving	Saving per case	No of cases p.a Collective	Average cases per quarter	No of cases per quarter				Total saving (2 years)	Public service getting saving
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Homelessness prevented	2,724	100	25	11	16	43		190,680	LA Housing
Evictions prevented	752	50	12.5	4	11	4		13,536	RPs /other landlords
Reduced requirement for Temporary Accommodation	1,404	25	6.25	4	20	17		57,564	LA Housing
Reduced rough sleeping	8,605	20	5	0	6	15		180,705	Range of services
Clients find employment	7,972	25	6.25	1	2	13		127,552	DWP
TOTAL	£21,457							£570,037	

Table 2 – Complex Needs cost saving analysis Fylde

Type of Cost saving	Saving per case	No of cases p.a Collective	Average cases per quarter	No of cases per quarter				Total saving (2 years)	Public service getting saving
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Homelessness prevented see Note 1	2,724	14	4		2	5	7	38,136	LA Housing

Evictions prevented See Note 2	752	11	4		8	3	0	8,272	RPs /other landlords
Reduced requirement for Temporary Accommodation See Note 3	1,404	7	2		5	1	1	9,828	LA Housing
Reduced rough sleeping See Note 4	8,605	8	3		2	3	3	68,840	Range of services
Clients find employment See Note 5	7,972	4	2		2	0	2	31,888	DWP
TOTAL	£21,457	44						£156,964	

Notes

1. Homelessness prevented

The complex needs tenancy support officer has enabled us to proactively work with clients facing homelessness. The role has worked alongside the Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer to take on more complex cases of vulnerable households. Barriers have been the need to review the customer journey within Fylde, to introduce a rota system and clear lines of communication between the two roles. Positive stories provided as case studies.

2. Evictions prevented

During Quarter 1, the Tenancy Support Worker worked with complex needs clients to prevent repossession, once the Section 21 notice had been served. The majority of cases were around housing benefit claims that had been suspended. This included applications to DHP and the local authorities' repossession prevention fund. This work load has lessened off and we are in a more proactive rather than reactive stage when dealing with threats of evictions.

3. Reduced requirement for Temporary accommodation

The Tenancy Support Role is increasing the prevention work of the local authority. In addition we have implemented changes in the customer journey in Fylde, by using resources from the Trailblazer to enhance the housing role in Customer Services. This has resulted in us picking up households sooner. This is having a knock on effect of reducing the requirement on temporary accommodation. This was especially evident in Qtr 1, due to the number of evictions prevented and again as with evictions prevented we are finding we are working with households sooner to prevent the crisis situation.

4. Rough Sleeping

The Tenancy Support Service has enabled us to have a dedicated resource to deal with rough sleepers. All reports are responded to and clients engaged with and supported to come and work with us. In terms of support we offer is around assisting them to access a tenancy and support required to sustain that tenancy. We run a tenancy training course and all clients are requested to attend this course as it helps to provide a reference for Landlords where clients may previously lost or not held tenancies. In addition we work jointly with F2F YMCA to run a rent bond scheme where we source private sector tenancies with private landlords and support clients into the tenancies. This is the support worker who responds to all reports of rough sleepers within Fylde and if we have a location we will go out and engage with them.

Once a tenancy is secured we will then ensure furniture and white good are provided with charitable funding or organisations and we also help clients to access the Foodbank which is located in the old council offices on Clifton Drive opposite M&S. <https://fylde.foodbank.org.uk/>. We also operate a No Second Night Out policy for all 'new' rough sleepers which enables them to have emergency temporary accommodation or up to 5 nights to give them time to look for alternative options. This can be extended if clients are actively looking for accommodation and engaging with our services to give more time.

The rough sleeper count in Fylde in Nov 17 was 2, and 1 of these has been found accommodation and 1 we have not been successful with engagement. In addition we have 2 new rough sleepers, one has been secured complex need accommodation on a crisis basis in Lancaster and the other we are sourcing accommodation while they engage with us. We have already resolved their benefit issues. The authority is experiencing street begging, from people claiming to be homeless, but when their circumstances have been checked they are housed and in receipt of benefits.

5. Clients find employment

In Quarter 2, due to Universal Credit Sanctions we supported 2 clients into employment. This has included referring into the appropriate agencies but in addition attending job centre interviews. One client was sanctioned for 526 days and the other client needed to source employment for 16 hours in order to be above the benefit cap. In Quarter 3 we have been working quite extensively with the client provided as the case study to assist them to access employment over 16 hours, but unfortunately they have stopped engaging and will be facing eviction shortly. We will continue to try to engage with this client as the private landlord we have a long standing relationship with and wish to demonstrate that the support is available, if the client will engage. In Qtr 4 we have managed to sustain employment for one client and one client has gone into employment.

COMPLEX NEEDS CASE STUDIES

Complex Needs Tenancy Support Worker	
Presenting Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below the knee amputee • Use of one arm • Dependent child aged 9 • Mental health issues due to disability, suicidal tendencies and history of self-harm • Staying with friends – overcrowded • Lost employment • Section 21 notice and lost tenancy 	
Prevention actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the family to make an application to MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast. • Provided temporary accommodation for the customer and his family while their MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast application was processed. • Awarded the family Priority Banding so that their housing needs could be met quicker. • Applied for funding once the family had been allocated suitable accommodation so that they could pay for the required rent in advance (Awarded) • Applied to Glasspool Charity for funding for flooring for the property as customer uses a wheelchair indoors (Awarded) • Applied to Swallowdale Children’s Trust for bedroom furniture for daughter’s bedroom (Awarded) • Applied to Lancashire Care and Urgent Needs Scheme for furniture and white goods for the property (Awarded) • Referral made to Fylde Council’s Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme for assessment and funding for a free standing bath to be fitted in the property (Pending) 	
Summary/Outcome	
After a significant period of homelessness where the family did not have a place they could call home, they are now in adapted, stable accommodation and happily settled in their new home.	

Complex Needs Tenancy Support Worker
Presenting Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street homeless rough sleeping, suspected victim of modern day slavery. • Mental health and alcohol issues • Estranged from immediate family and son • History of roaming street homeless across the Country to try to get a better life
Prevention actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred into Tenancy Training • Initiated attendance at substance misuse service • Assisted to source private rented accommodation in Fylde with rent bond and rent in advance • Charitable applications to Vicars Relief and Invest to Save • Successfully negotiated with Landlord to have all admin fees removed from application • UC47 for direct payment completed • Affordability assessed • Ongoing support to Landlord and Tenant
Summary/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street homelessness prevented • Probably priority • Accommodated into PRS with landlord incentive

Complex Needs Tenancy Support Worker
Presenting Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to reside at family address due to ongoing Police investigations • Personal element of UC sanctioned for 520 days over 2 years • Autistic traits
Prevention actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sourced temporary accommodation • Tenancy Training completed • Assisted into employment including travel to Liverpool for interview • Employment sourced in Blackpool • Sourced private rented accommodation in Blackpool • Affordability assessment completed • Charitable application's completed to Vicars Relief and Invest to Save for rent in advance and rent bond • Successfully negotiated reduced admin fees with Landlord • Ongoing support via Invest to Save checks
Summary/Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened with homelessness within 28 days prevented • Accommodated into PRS with landlord incentive • Support into employment

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	9

DISABLED FACILITY GRANT PERFORMANCE (UPDATE)

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

On the 20th June 2017 a decision of the Environment, Health and Housing committee instructed that an update on the Council's Disabled Facility Grant programme be presented to the committee in 12 months' time.

The attached information item reports key statistics on approvals, spend and satisfaction levels with the service.

The service has maintained a 0 waiting list for clients requesting a DFG.

Waiting lists at County Council have reduced from two years to 3 months.

Approvals for grants has increased from 103 in 2016/17 to 141 in 2017/18.

Funding provided by the Better Care Fund has increased from £929,565 in 2017/18 to £1,010,510 in 2018/19.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

- DFG performance (task and finish group update)
- Private sector housing assistance policy 2018/19

LINK TO INFORMATION

[DFG performance update 18.19.docx](#)

[H:\COMMITTEE REPORTS\Housing Assistance Policy\2018 policy\Housing services private sector assistance policy v.2.1.docx](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

It was a decision from the Environmental, Health and Housing committee meeting dated 20/6/2017 that an update was produced in 12 months in relation to the DFG service.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Tom Birtwistle (01253 658691) Tom.Birtwistle@fylde.gov.uk

Housing Services

Disabled Facility Grant performance update 2018-19

Introduction

On the 5th January 2016 it was a recommendation of the Environment, Health and Housing committee that a task and finish group be established to specifically look into the Council's delivery of Disabled Facility Grants.

Three consecutive meetings were arranged and undertaken in early/mid 2016 to comprehensively review the service and place 18 recommendations for further investigation/consideration.

This report summarised the work undertaken by the Housing Services section in relation to these meetings and an update on the current and historic performance of the Housing Services Section and partners in relation to Disabled Facility Grants (DFG).

In June 2017 the Environment, Health and Housing committee requested the Housing Services team report on their performance for the financial year 2017/18.

The Council's Disabled Facilities Grant team were recognised nationally by being nominated as the "Best Environmental Health project" by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in 2017.

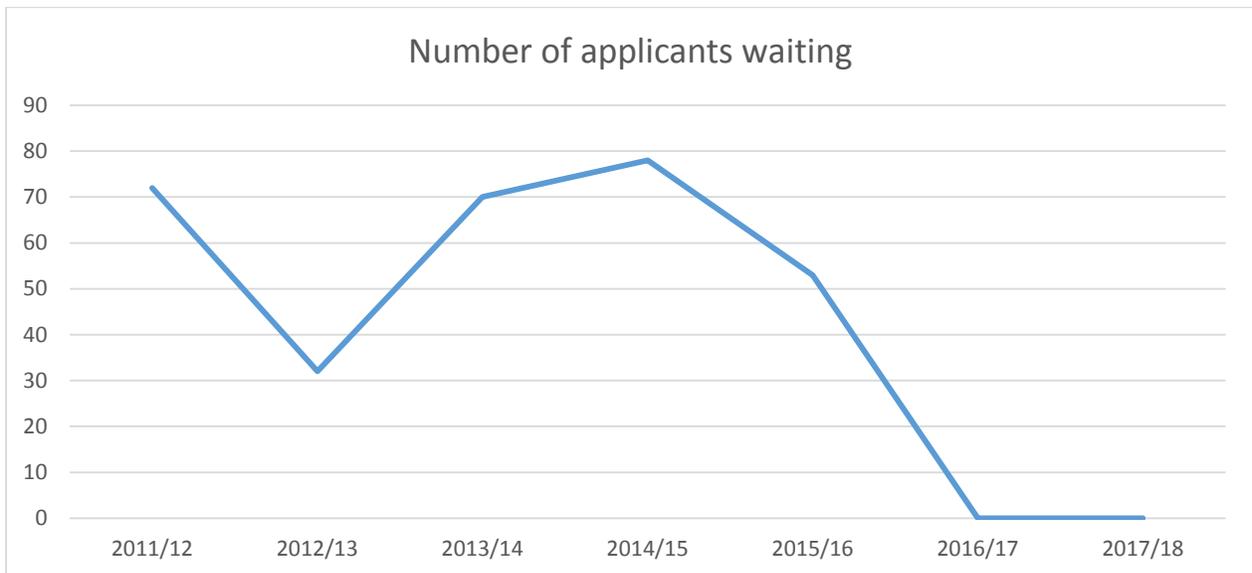
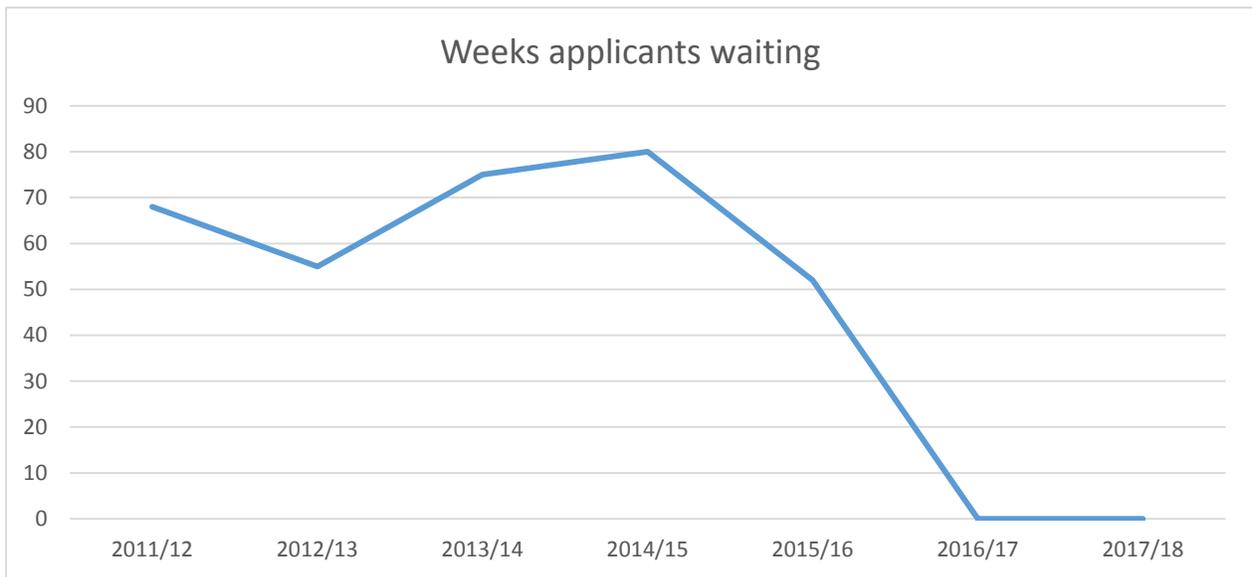
This report should be read in conjunction with the new Fylde Council Housing Assistance Policy which has been formulated as a result of the information in this report and government guidance.

Fylde Holding List

Fylde Council are currently maintaining a holding list of 0 clients which has continued over the previous 12 months. This is despite an increase in the number of referrals.

Year on year summary of Fylde Council 'holding list' (2011-2018)

Below is a year on year comparison of both the 'holding list' and the length of time on the list.



Lancashire County Council performance

Waiting lists at County have significantly fallen over the previous 12 months. The waiting list for standard cases in Fylde is now 3 months. The fast track process (for urgent cases) also allows referrals to be directed to district councils.

Staffing increases and better working relations between districts and county have resulted in reduced processing times.

OT waiting list - cross referenced to include only those in current OT work tray													
	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Grand Total
Central													
A	4	2	2	3	2		7	2	2	1	3	2	30
B		2	2	2	4	3	2	3	4	8	3	7	40
C	1	3	1	5	6	5		1		2	3	4	31
D	2		6	3	2		3	2	1	2	4	7	32
East													
E		1			1			1	1	2	2	4	12
F	1		1			1		1		2	1		7
G		1						2					3
H								1	1				2
I			1	1		1	1			2	2		8
North													
Fylde										1	12	14	27
J				1	2		4	4	3	5	4	4	27
K										9	9	13	31
Grand Total	8	9	13	15	18	10	17	17	12	35	45	56	255

Referrals

Below is the number of monthly cases which were received by the Council (as discussed at priority panel).

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
9	5	5	11	12	20	8	14	23	12	27	21

Numbers of referrals have increased which is linked to the reduction in waiting times at County.

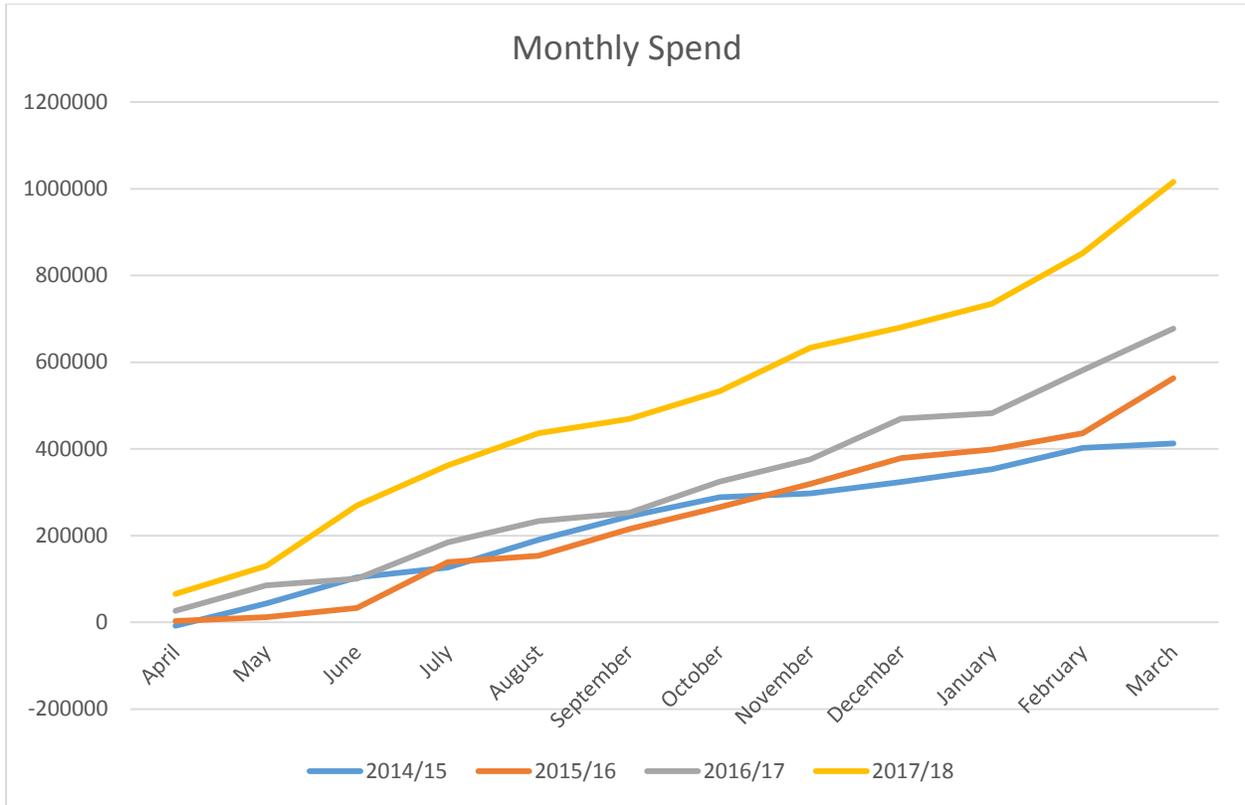
Ongoing cases at FBC

Below is a list of the monthly ongoing adaptations which are being processed by the Council. This gives a snapshot of the month on month workload within the department as well as a reflection of the number of referrals being processed. In March 2018 the Council were processing 90 separate adaptations in differing stages of completion compared to 50 in April 2017.

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
50	55	45	47	45	46	56	61	61	77	75	90

Fylde DFG budget

Below is a month by month breakdown of the current DFG spend compared to the previous 3 financial years including any carry over.



There has been a year on year increase in capital spend which corresponds with the increase in approved grants. See below.

Approved Grants April/April.

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
62	94	103	141

Satisfaction survey results

Fylde council send satisfaction surveys to all our customers after they have received a property adaptation. The following are the results of these surveys.

Any customer enquires which report they are unsatisfied with the service are investigated by the Principal Housing Services Officer.

Satisfaction with the service has either remained constant or improved over the past 12 months.

	LCC		Fylde		Fylde	
Customer Survey	8. How do you rate the length of time taken from your request for help to the OT visiting you?		10. How do you rate the way in which Fylde BC office staff dealt with your enquiry?		15. Overall, how would you rate the level of the service you have received?	
	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17	2017/18
Excellent	46%	54%	78%	72%	80%	88%
Good	37%	34%	22%	28%	18%	11%
Adequate	6%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Poor	11%	4%	0%	0%	2%	1%

2017/18 customer comments

Below are a range of comments left by customers.

“The wet room will also help my wife with her disability”

“Service was excellent”

“More joined up, reduced work time. Service by Fylde Council and Social services is excellent. Mr Laver provides a fantastic job”

“We had excellent service from everybody involved. Thank you very much”

“This has made my life so much easier and has given me my dignity back”

“I have not injured myself recently-no falls! I can shower independently or with assistance rather than to travel to my daughters house”

“I feel safe to bathe for the first time in 4 years”

“Made life easier not only for me but also my sister who is my carer”

Drop off list

The Council monitor the reasons why some OT referrals do not result in an adaptation. Changes in the adaptation policy and increased funding has resulted in the first reported drop in these figures over the previous 4 years (34 down to 18).

Reason	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Works done privately/L.lord	4	6	9	3	1	23
Not proceeding	2	3	1	4	4	14
Fail means test	3	3	2	8	3	19
Landlord not allow	0	1	0	2	0	3
Moved to care/rest home	0	2	2	3	1	8
Deceased	0	3	5	6	6	20
Failure to disclose financial information	0	0	1	0	1	2
Moved House	1	0	5	4	1	11
Refused proposed work	1	0	0	3	1	5
Property not eligible	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	11	18	25	34	18	106

Benchmarking

Fylde Council benchmark our DFG processing times across Lancashire. It was the focus of the Lancashire DFG group to focus on times rather than processes which can vary between council's for a variety of reasons such as team sizes, budgets and audit requirements. Below are the average times from receipt of an application form to a completed adaptation.

District	Total working days 16/17	Total working days 17/18	Change
A	114	91	23 faster
B	129	109	20 faster
C	160	199	39 slower
D	130	43	87 faster
E	91	91	0 change
F	111	211	100 slower
G	321	323	2 slower
I	220	152	68 faster
Fylde	90	65	25 faster
J	111	135	24 slower

Fylde has seen a reduction in processing times this is mainly due to a decrease in the number of large adaptations which have been conducted in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 and the new adaptation policy and work in relation to time lean and reduced administration.

The average processing times across Lancashire for 2017/18 is 141.9 working days. Fylde are 65 days (3.25 months).

Conclusions

Fylde have maintained a list of 0 clients over the previous 2 financial years.

Referrals from County have increased year on year over the previous four financial years.

Waiting lists at county have reduced from over two years to three months.

Funding for adaptations has further increased to £1,010,510 for 2018/19

An updated Housing Services Assistance Policy is due for implementation in July 2018 to further assist more clients to allow the Council to process grant applications quicker and to assist in the allocation of increased funding.

Satisfaction results remain high with 88% rating the service as excellent.

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	10
ANNUAL OVERVIEW – FYLDE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP 2017/18			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The report provides information on the performance of the Fylde Community Safety Partnership. This is a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 as amended by section 126 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Police & Crime Act 2009 and the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Bryan Ward, Community Safety Officer; Lancashire County Council Multi Agency Data Exchange; Responsible Authorities of the Community Safety Partnership.

LINK TO INFORMATION

[Fylde Community Safety Partnership](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

This is a statutory requirement under the requirements of the Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Regulations, 2009 and Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 as amended by section 126 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Police & Crime Act 2009 and the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact : Bryan Ward, 01253 658467 or bryan.ward@fylde.gov.uk



INFORMATION NOTE

FYLDE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership, its priorities and funding position

1.1 Statutory Partners in Fylde CSP comprise:

Fylde Council

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Constabulary

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

Public Health including Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Groups

Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company and the National Probation Service

The above named partners are also referred to as 'responsible authorities'

There are additional partners who participate but are not statutorily obligated to do so, such as representatives from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and the voluntary sector.

The Fylde Community Safety Partnership's overarching aim is:

"To promote community safety, reduce levels of crime, disorder and road casualties, as well as improving the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit the Borough of Fylde." The Partnership is statutory in nature and its partners are obligated to participate.

Fylde Council is a lead partner in that it co-ordinates activity and administration within the Partnership.

1.2. Strategic Assessment

It is a statutory requirement to conduct a 'Strategic Assessment' within all Community Safety Partnership Districts with all partners contributing to identify priorities. For 2017/18 the priorities of the CSP have been identified, developed and analysed with any potential threats at both County and a local level. The assessment determines the priorities for a three year period with annual reviews. Current priorities have identified domestic abuse; improving road safety; reducing reoffending; countering substance misuse and countering anti-social behaviour. Additionally there are Lancashire wide priorities which include child sexual exploitation and victim vulnerability and these are highlighted through the inappropriate use of social media where contact is made via Facebook, snapchat and Instagram in particular. A local priority reassessment exercise took place in 2017 which determined local priorities until 2019. The local Action Plan may be viewed [here](#).

1.3 Partnership Financial Position

Income

The Partnership is funded by a variety of funding streams including residual monies passed to it by the former Local Strategic Partnership. In 2017/18 the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Grant provided a standard £10,000 grant but the partnership were successful in being awarded additional funds. At the opening of the 2017/18 financial year its balances stood at £26,029. With the additional grants provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the total income reached £42,267. Additionally, Fylde Council provide a budget for both Capital and Revenue for the provision of all CCTV coverage throughout Fylde which includes the annual commitment to Wyre for the monitoring service provided for our town centre cameras.

Expenditure

In 2017/18 a total spend of £21,437 was allocated to community safety initiatives. At the end of the financial year the balance of £20,830 remained in the Community Safety budget which was requested as slippage into

2018/19.

Major expenditure:-

- Twelve month provision of Diversionary Activities for Young People with a consultation exercise
- Positive Pathways activities for ex-offenders
- Body Worn CCTV cameras and equipment

Successful and Ongoing Initiatives and Activities:

- Multi-agency and partner operations to address violent crime, domestic violence, criminal damage and acquisitive crime and joint alcohol proxy sales operations with Trading Standards
- LANPAC Membership Fee
- Crime Prevention Signage
- CCTV signage
- Crime prevention materials
- Locally distributed crime prevention literature
- Panic alarms re domestic abuse
- Contribution to Male Domestic Abuse Campaign.
- Attendance at a Community Safety Seminar (Community Safety Officer)
- DNA Selecta Mark Kits
- Body worn CCTV cameras supporting equipment

All initiatives undertaken by the community safety partnership have been successfully evaluated and have contributed significantly to the overall low levels of crime and disorder in the Borough. Partnership success is also due to the continuing commitment of partners despite the effects of austerity and the most significant challenge to the partnership is how to address the public concerns and perceptions regarding crime and anti-social behaviour with ever reducing resources. Essentially not all initiatives require money, hence the importance of strong partnership working.

During 2017/18, Fylde Community Safety Partnership continued to maintain the Fylde District as the second 'safest' place in the County, with lower crime and anti-social behaviour levels than other Districts in Lancashire. There were further excellent results and some fine examples of outstanding partnership working, once again delivering good value for money.

Several multi-agency initiatives have been delivered throughout the year with Fylde Council Departments taking an active part. There have been some inexpensive and cost neutral initiatives which have been delivered, supported by physical resources from the CSP and other agencies. Some notable examples of relatively low cost initiatives include Diversionary Activities which have run throughout the year to focus on dealing with youth related anti-social behaviour and an initiative aimed at Male Domestic Abuse which ran during the Christmas and New Year period. There have also been multi-agency initiatives to target burglary, shop lifting, thefts, and fly tipping and a consultation exercise with young people was also carried out to determine what could be provided in future.

Initiatives and work undertaken by the CSP and its partners are all aimed at reducing crime and disorder within Fylde in increasingly difficult times where police officer numbers have fallen and resources have diminished. Fylde has, however, seen an increase of eight Police Community Support Officers in 2018 who are spread throughout the Borough. Determined efforts by all agencies concentrate their efforts into priority areas, for example, the Revolution group concentrates on prolific and priority offenders and future prison date releases; another looks at instances of domestic abuse and work done to counter this; there is a restorative justice panel which has regular panel meetings to try and reach amicable solutions between victims and offenders and continuing work has been done in the last year on an approach to Early Action and Intervention which is a multi-agency approach to support troubled and vulnerable families and individuals across the Fylde to 'transform people's lives'.

3. Crime Statistics

3.1 All Crime

Between April 2016 and March 2017 there were a total of 3,636 crimes recorded in Fylde. In the year April 2017 to March 2018 this figure had increased to 4,207 crimes, representing a 15.7% increase or 571 more crimes. There has been a re-categorisation of domestic burglary to what is now called residential burglary which encompasses the likes of thefts from garages and sheds, consequently there are no comparable figures from the previous year. There were 263 residential burglaries in 2017/18 There were 58 more criminal damage and arson offences producing a 10% increase but vehicle offences decreased by 18.7% or 53 fewer recorded crimes. Bicycle theft decreased by 7.7% or 5 fewer crimes. Shoplifting also decreased by 8.7% a reduction of 27 from the previous year.

High Impact Acquisitive Crime in Fylde increased from 188 crimes to 278, an increase of 47.7%. Fylde has seen an unprecedented increase in theft of lead flashing with over 30 offences reported in the last 3 months alone.

3.2 Violent Crime

Violent crime continues to show further increases although much of this is due to the counting rules from the Home Office on what is deemed to be a violent crime. Third party reporting, where a witness sees an assault and reports it to the Police is recorded as a crime irrespective of whether the victim reports it himself.

The increase in violence against the person which equates to a 27.9% increase of 1,397 victims in 2017/18 compared to 1,092 in 2016/17.

3.3 Victim Based Crime

Victim based crime in Fylde produced a 13.8% increase or 469 more crimes. Theft crimes occur across the whole district in Fylde and not disproportionately in any area. It has been recognised that the area suffers from travelling criminals with a large proportion of offences occurring as a result of property being inadvertently left insecure, particularly garages, garden sheds and motor vehicles. An initiative to address this type of crime had a degree of success with some notable crime reductions.

4. Domestic Abuse

The definition of domestic abuse is *'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults 16 years or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'*.

Domestic Abuse Crime increased in the period April 2017 to March 2018 by 36.6%, totalling 491 Crimes compared to 359 the previous year. This is however the second lowest total in Lancashire.

Overall, high risk victims of domestic abuse have increased in Fylde in terms of the numbers of offences recorded and as a proportion of the total crime in Fylde, however these numbers are relatively low in comparison. It is believed that this increase has been of a result of a continued drive to encourage victims to report recognising that there has previously been an under-reporting of domestic related crime.

In common with other Council's, a 'MARAC' exists to consider domestic abuse. This as a 'multi-agency risk assessment conference' and it meets monthly to discuss the victims of domestic abuse deemed to be at a high risk of harm with an aim to reduce the risk to the victims or their immediate families. Part of the work involves specialist workers having close links with victims of domestic violence and protective interventions as necessary. The number of cases referred in averages less than ten per month. Specialist domestic violence courts located within Blackpool deal with the more extreme cases.

Domestic abuse has increased by 36.5% compared to 2016/17, with the number of crimes increasing from 359 to 490. Numerically, Fylde has had the 2nd lowest increase across the County. All districts across Lancashire have shown an increase during the last 12 months. The increase across Lancashire has been 27.6%.

The quarterly totals have increased throughout the year, from 103 crimes in Q1 to 148 in Q4. Monthly totals have ranged from 29 to 56, with the average being 41.

- 64% (n=312) of the crimes were assaults this compared to 61% (n=220) in 2016/17.
- 13% (n=65) of the crimes were harassment. The number of crimes is similar to last year – 68.

- 42% (n=204) of DA crimes were alcohol related. Proportionally there has been a small increase, from 39% (n=140) last year.
- 72% of the victims were female with 28% male.
- 34% (n=159) of the victims were aged between 18 and 30 years old, which is reduction from 42% last year, although the number of victims are similar.
- 53% of the crimes occurred from Friday to Sunday.
- Peak wards have been Central (n=50) and Warton and Westby (n=53) – 21% of all DA has occurred in these 2 wards. 70% of the offences in Warton were assaults, with 64% in Central (same as the district proportion).

Offenders (Individuals)

- 79 offenders – 74 male and 5 female.
- Age range was from 12 to 76 years.
- 41% of the offenders were aged from 18 to 30 years old.
- 76% of all offenders are aged 40 years or under.

Following the service re-commissioning undertaken in early 2017, the service provision across Lancashire and in Fylde now falls under Lancashire Victims Services and Fylde Council make an annual contribution towards the Domestic Abuse service.

The voluntary sector - Fylde Coast Women's Aid also continues to provide an excellent service and delivers a range of services to advise, educate and support families. The Group does much work within schools. A funding contribution made by the CSP to enable FCWA to work with the Police on a project over the Christmas period provided reassurance to male victims of sexual abuse.

It is a mandatory responsibility placed on the Community Safety Partnership to conduct a 'Domestic Homicide Review' where a fatality occurs when there are two or more people aged 16 years or older and living together in a close relationship. The process and procedure have recently been reviewed at a County level and a DHR group exists to share learning experiences from such reviews.

5. Road Casualties

In the year April 2017 to March 2018, figures produced in January 2018 showed that there were 25 killed or serious injured casualties one of which was a fatality. The number of slight casualties remained the same as last year currently 128 compared to 131.

A multi-agency partnership exists between Fylde, Wyre and Lancaster whereby all road safety issues are analysed and actioned. The Community Roadwatch scheme continues with volunteers assisting in informing speeding motorists to reduce their vehicle speed, particularly in rural areas. A dedicated Road Safety analyst provides data for each locality which is useful in determining where additional preventative resources can be directed.

Of particular interest this year was an event which was aimed at 'Senior' drivers in Fylde, which provided a host of information and education to older people who are notoriously involved in road traffic collisions.

6. Areas of focus and the work of the Community Safety Partnership

6.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

The reduction of Anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our communities continues to be a priority for the Partnership. Each month a number of partners come together to consider the reported ASB issues arising across a range of areas, including personal, nuisance and environmental issues. Discussions within this group also focus on individuals who are high risk victims of anti-social behaviour and actions can be taken by agencies to reduce or eliminate this risk. The process known as ASBRAC (Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference) is chaired by the Community Safety Officer prior to the Police led Early Action Cases which looks at vulnerable families and individuals.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act in 2014 has provided the victims of Anti-social behaviour with a number of measures which can be implemented by the Council, Police and Housing Providers to address the behaviour of perpetrators. It also provides the victims with the opportunity to invoke the 'Community Trigger'

where they feel that agencies are not dealing with their complaints of ASB.

Certain concerns have been raised during the past twelve months despite a general decrease in ASB across the Borough. The main concerns concentrated in and around Warton and Westby where anti-social behaviour connected to the Fracking Site and youth related ASB in the village has been linked to specific individuals and premises.

In 2017-18 All Police recorded ASB in Fylde decreased by 8.3%, from 2,653 to 2,432 which equates to 221 incidents fewer. There were notable decreases in the wards of Ashton (-30, -7.6%), Central (-78, -22%), Kilnhouse (-28, -18.4%) and Park Ward (-61, 51.3%). Only 6 of the 21 wards showed some increase throughout the year with Warton and Westby showing a 25.8% increase from 244 to 307.

Fylde Council reported ASB which also includes Personal, Nuisance and Environmental ASB, showed an end of year reduction of 90 complaints. From 1,449 to 1,359. Noise nuisance; neighbour disputes and Flytipping are the most reported types of ASB.

6.2 Substance Misuse

Drugs

The misuse of drugs remains a relatively low threat in Fylde compared to most other parts of Lancashire. During the period April 2017 to March 2018 drugs offences showed a slight decrease from 72 in 2016/17 to 59 - a 18.1% decrease and a second year of reduction.

There continues to be a change in the substance of choice – from Class A drugs to cannabis and psychoactive substances (legal highs) The use of ‘Spice’ has been highlighted as a potential risk due to its availability and low cost.

Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) also known as Inspire are the commissioned service provider in Fylde. They provide a range of services to Fylde’s drug clients with both alcohol and drug problems. Re-commissioning of service provision will take place later in the year. Young Addaction are the County young people’s service provider where some of the work undertaken in Fylde has been carried out in partnership initiatives. A training and awareness session was delivered in St Annes as part of a safeguarding initiative early in 2018. Overall responsibility for Substance Misuse and commissioning in Lancashire is the responsibility of Lancashire Public Health.

Alcohol

Fylde CSP has Alcohol misuse as a local priority area. However, Public Health have now developed a strategy which will subsequently address most of the concerns especially amongst young people who tend to ‘experiment’ with alcohol.

The Action Plan for Fylde is constantly reviewed and updated to address the issues which directly concern the people of Fylde. Resources will be aimed at the Health, Wellbeing and Safety of all age groups within Fylde.

Alcohol related crime in Fylde increased by 22.8% or 124 crimes during the past year. This is a second consecutive year of increase. Licensing conditions stipulate that Pub Landlords attend a regular ‘Pubwatch’ meeting which provides a wealth of information to them. A monthly report highlights which licensed premises have recorded crimes on or adjacent to their premises.

Local group meetings are attended by Fylde Council Community Safety, FBC Licensing, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, NHS North Lancs. Public Health, CRS, Young Addaction, Help Direct, Lancashire Young Peoples Services and other service providers.

6.3 Fire Safety

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) report that Fylde remains an area which is not a cause for concern.

Community Fire Safety Practitioners provide a programme of education and awareness to the community and there continue to be fire awareness sessions such as the ESCAYPS course which accepts young person referrals who receive a 5 week structured programme of fire awareness education.

Arson offences for April 2017 to March 2018 showed an increase of 18 incidents on the previous year from 11 to

29 which are very low compared to other Districts.

The Fire service continue to provide Home Fire Safety Checks for the vulnerable and community work has become a vital part of the service provided by LFRS.

6.4 Cumbria & Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service

The National Probation Service was set up on 1 June 2014, and is a statutory criminal justice service that supervises high-risk offenders released into the community. Nationally, NPS work in partnership with 21 community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) that manage low and medium risk offenders. They also work in partnership with the courts, police, and community safety partnerships and with private and voluntary sector partners in order to manage offenders safely and effectively.

Together, the NPS and the CRCs have replaced the former 35 probation trusts and they are responsible for:

- Preparing pre-sentence reports for courts, to help them select the most appropriate sentence
- Managing approved premises for offenders with a residence requirement on their sentence
- Assessing offenders in prison to prepare them for release on license to the community, when they will come under our supervision
- Helping all offenders serving sentences in the community to meet the requirements ordered by the courts
- Communicating with and prioritising the wellbeing of victims of serious sexual and violent offences,
- When the offender has received a prison sentence of 12 months or more, or is detained as a mental health patient.
- The new Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAP) Orders are popular with the courts as they can give the service user a prescribed number of activity days and guidance by the National Probation Service.

Additionally, and working within the CRC's, are 'Community Payback' who provide supervised unpaid work across the Fylde. There is currently a local agreement to provide two full days work per month on a programme of nominated projects.

6.5 Police and Crime Commissioner

The office of the PCC is a non-statutory partner in the CSP but the PCC has been keen to continue involvement with the CSP's and sends a representative to CSP meetings.

The PCC holds regular meetings with Council representatives on the Police and Crime Panel. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act put in place a flexible framework for partnership working between the PCC and community safety partners. Whilst having regard to cross border and national issues, PCC's work effectively with other local leaders to prioritise resources to suit local needs and priorities.

The PCC has responsibility for:

- Appointing the Chief Constable and holding them to account for the running of their force
- Setting out a 5 year Police and Crime Plan(in consultation with the Chief Constable)
Determining local policing priorities. Setting the annual local precept and annual force precept and annual force budget
- Making community safety grants to other organisations aside from the Chief Constable (including, but not limited to Community Safety Partnerships)
- The PCC'S Community Action Fund. Fylde has directly benefited from this fund.

The PCC has a budget which currently includes the policing grant from the Home Office, various other grants include the Drugs Interventions Programme funding and funds raised through the local authority precepts in the Lancashire force area.

PCCs are not a 'responsible authority' on Community Safety Partnerships, however, they are an influential and valued partner. There is a reciprocal duty for PCCs and responsible authorities to cooperate with each other and have regard to each other's priorities for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder, including ASB, reducing reoffending and reducing substance misuse. PCCs are also able to require a report from a CSP where they are not content that a CSP is not carrying out their duties effectively and efficiently.

Following the re-election of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the grant to the CSP for 2018/19 will continue

in the sum of £10,000

7. Emerging Issues

During 2018, ongoing statutory responsibilities are placed on local authorities and the responsible authorities in regard to Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking and the Prevent Strategy of the Counter Terrorism Act 2015. Fylde Council staff and members, have received Counter Terrorism awareness training along with several community groups who have been made aware of these issues and threats to our overall safety and vulnerabilities.

Consideration is always given to potential threats when planning major events. There is a County wide Strategic Hate Crime Group a Lancashire wide ASB delivery group and a Prevent Delivery Partnership Group which are all attended by Fylde Officers.

8. Risk Assessment

Strategic decision making in regard to Community Safety is the responsibility of the Lancashire and Unitary Chief Executives through the Public Service Board overseeing how all partners and agencies work together. Blackpool Wyre and Fylde constantly work together as a strategic group within West Division. This doesn't have an impact on the local Community Safety Partnerships who have neither merged nor disbanded as they deliver locally led initiatives to address local problems.

Local CSPs are regarded as 'delivery' groups and concentrate on local issues for local people. Much of this work is actioned in Fylde through the monthly held 'Tactical, Tasking and Co-ordinating' group.

Despite several changes in personnel and officer attendance during the year by partner agencies, it is evident that they are still committed to the Community Safety Partnership. All our agencies and partners make a significant contribution towards overall community safety within the District. Success with our partners has included the volunteers who are based within the Wyre CCTV Studio where they control and manage 15 of our CCTV cameras. Continued partnership work has been undertaken with the Fylde Foodbank; the Wyre and Fylde Disability Partnership; Neighbourhood Watch and Just Good Friends.

9. Conclusion

With further increases in crime and a reduction in anti-social behaviour, Fylde Community Safety Partnership can still claim to be a successful and strong partnership which supports partnership working in minimising how crime and disorder impacts on the community. Fylde remains a safe place in which to live, work and visit.

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM : Bryan Ward, Community Safety Officer (65)8467

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	11

AGE UK LANCASHIRE– ANNUAL REPORT

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The Council has a Service Level Agreement in place with Age UK Lancashire to provide an information and advice service in Fylde. As part of this agreement, Age UK provides a report to committee each year, summarising its performance over the previous year.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/lancashire>

LINK TO INFORMATION

[AGE UK LANCASHIRE ANNUAL REPORT](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

Age UK Lancashire is identified as one of the Council's key formal partnerships. There is a service level agreement in place where the Council pays a grant of £12,000 per annum for the information and advice service. The annual report produced by Age UK Lancashire provides an opportunity for councillors to ensure that the council is receiving value for money.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Tracy Morrison (658521) or Alison Read, Age UK Lancashire (01257 479017)

AGE UK LANCASHIRE
FYLDE INFORMATION AND ADVICE SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2017 – MARCH 2018

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1941, Age UK Lancashire has a vision, where those in later life can make positive contributions to the communities they live in, make informed choices and retain their independence and wellbeing.

We will achieve this by:

- positively engaging with people in later life, their families and carers;
- providing high quality responsive services to meet their needs;
- campaigning and awareness raising around the issues and challenges faced in later life and by;
- loving later life and encouraging others to love and value those in later life too.

Our 3 year aims (2015-18) are to

- 1) Engage more people in later life in our services, with relevant, sustainable, integrated and inclusive provision available across the diversity of Lancashire communities.
- 2) Offer high quality, innovative and responsive services, an organisation with a culture of continuous improvement.
- 3) Develop and retain highly skilled and resilient leadership and management, ensuring that we develop and sustain the capability and capacity to enable us to operate effectively and efficiently across the County

Age UK Lancashire (AUKL) is the leading organisation in the county providing support & services to enable vulnerable people and their carers to live independently in the way they choose. We promote & facilitate social inclusion and improve health and wellbeing through a variety of delivery models. These include group and peer activities befriending and mentoring and one-to-one tailored and person-centered support. Services vary across areas according to local need.

During 2017-2018 in Fylde Borough we had the following services:

- Information & Advice including case work
- Discharge Aftercare – practical support for people discharged from hospital
- Dementia Community Links – befriending scheme
- Rural Outreach social groups and lunch clubs
- Exercise groups – including walking football, gentle exercise and walking groups
- Home Help service
- Foot and Nail Care
- Age of Opportunity – supporting people aged 50+ back into employment

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Information & Advice Service

Information and Advice is Age UK's flagship service and we are proud to be delivering this service to older people across Fylde borough.

Age UK Lancashire provides a comprehensive Information & Advice service to older people and their carers throughout the Fylde area. This is a free, one-to-one service supporting, informing and advising older people and their carers, often at the most vulnerable times in their life. Our services include: signposting and referral to other agencies, providing information and advice, form filling and casework. There is high need for the home visiting element of our service, particularly to support older people who are housebound to claim their welfare benefit entitlements and we endeavor to assist with this wherever possible using both staff and trained volunteers.

We support all enquiries that are within our area of expertise and actively refer to other specialist advice services where appropriate such as Citizen's Advice Bureau for debt advice and Welfare Rights for benefit appeals. We work in close partnership with other advice agencies to ensure that we are providing cohesive, seamless, high quality services for older people across the borough. Our Advice Line service is well – established, where local older people and their carers can ring in directly and receive a call back for telephone advice if they cannot get to the office or the enquiry is more complex.

Our most common enquiries this year are around:

- Welfare Benefits
- Travel and leisure (including Blue Badge applications)
- Other money
- Local services and activities
- Housing options and Residential Care
- Consumer

The service can be accessed by calling in to the Age UK Lancashire office in St George's Rd, St Anne's, telephone, email, letter, referral from other community services or via one of Age UK Lancashire's other services. Home visits are provided for people unable to access the office, complex cases and lengthy form-filling. The office is open Monday to Friday 9.30am – 3.30pm with a telephone and email service operating Monday to Friday 9am – 3.00pm (via our 0300 303 1234 number) with an out of hours answerphone facility which gives the customer the option of ringing the Age UK national Advice Line for support out of hours (open 8am-7pm, 365 days per year).

The service works in partnership with a number of local key partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions, Welfare Rights, Pension Wise, Disability Information, Community Mental Health Team, CCG, New Fylde Housing, Fylde CAB, Care & Repair, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Hospital Discharge Team, Trinity Hospice, Rose mere Cancer Unit, Social Services, Stroke Association, Alzheimer's Association, Parkinson's Society and Lytham Hospital Dementia services.

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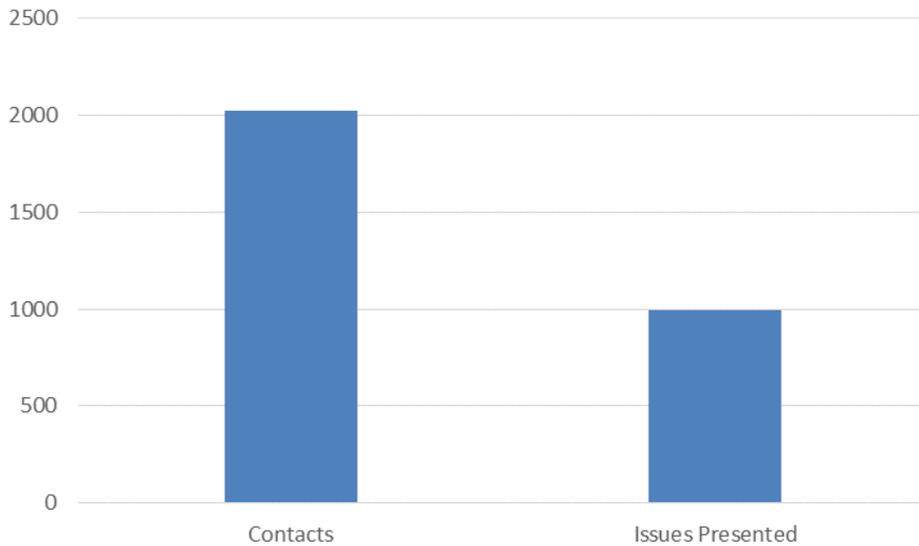


Eligibility criteria

People aged 65+ and their carers living in the Fylde Borough area, but we do endeavor to help younger people if we are able.

PROFILE OF SERVICE USERS

Total number of contacts and issues presented:



Total number of contacts	2,026
Total number of issues presented	994

597 people attended Information and advice surgeries

97 home visits were provided throughout the Fylde area

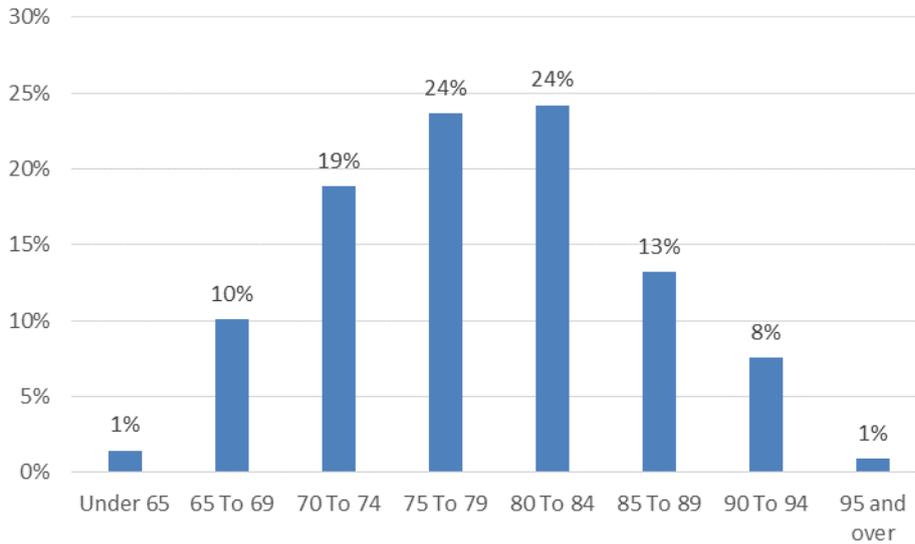
The service provided by Age UK Lancashire has led to an increase in older peoples' incomes of over £354,000 per annum in successful benefit applications.

Age UK Lancashire
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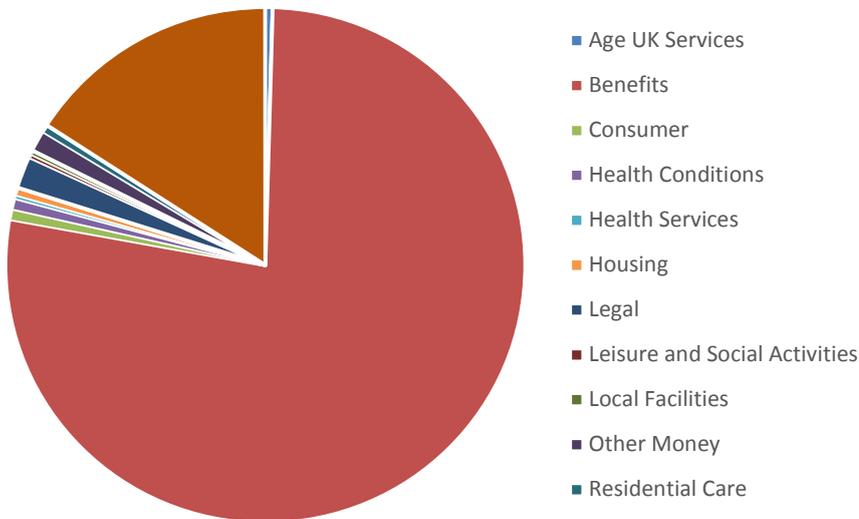
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Age Group:



Topic of enquiry:



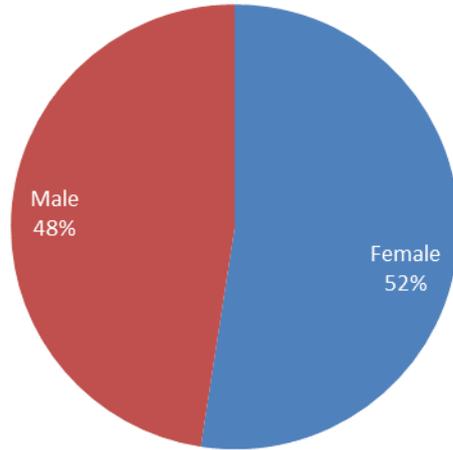
Topic	No. Enquiries
Age UK Services	2
Benefits	346
Consumer	3
Health Conditions	3
Health Services	1
Housing	2
Legal	9
Leisure and Social Activities	1
Local Facilities	1
Other Money	6
Residential Care	2
Travel	71

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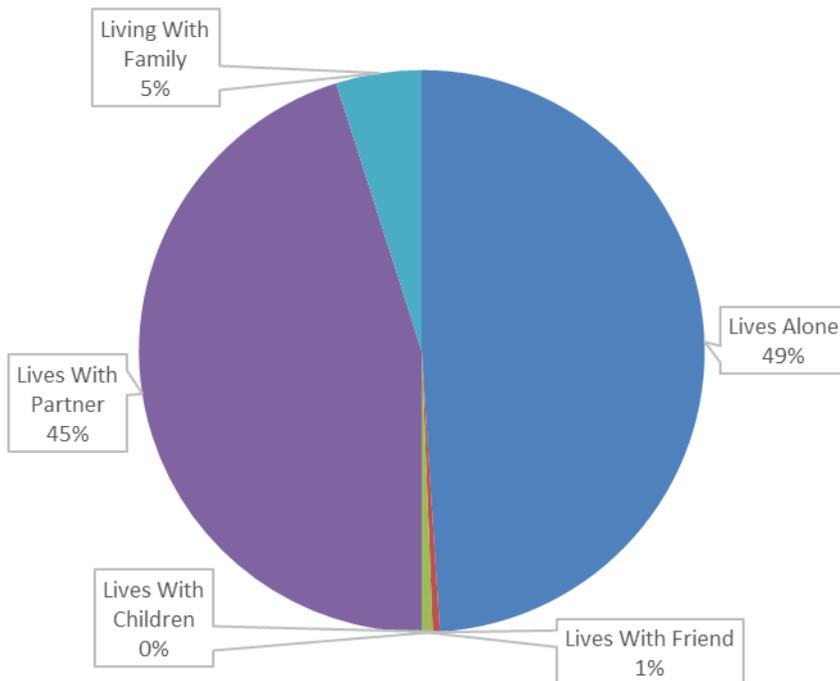
t 0300 303 1234
e admin@ageuklancs.org.uk
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Gender:



Living situation:

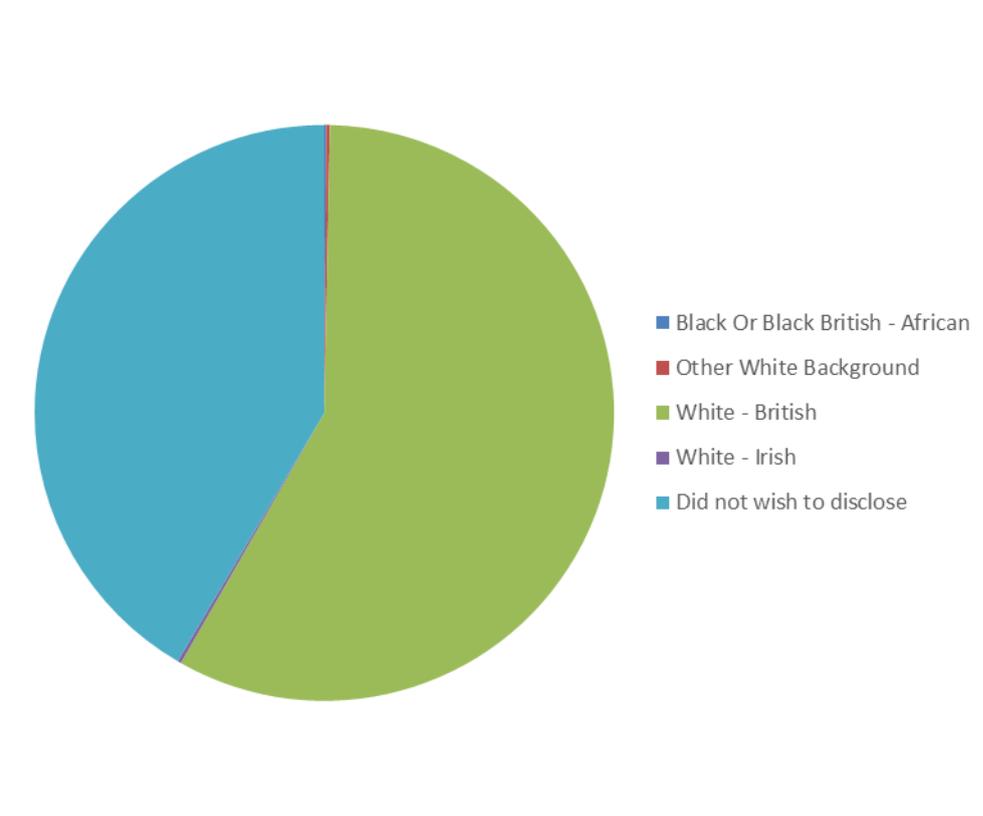


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Ethnicity:



STAFFING/VOLUNTEERS

The team consists of:

- 1 part time Information & Advice Working - providing office appointments and home visits for those clients who are unable to come to us [information and advice is available outside the core hours by ringing Age UK Lancashire’s 0300 303 1234 number]
- 1 I&A Volunteer - supporting the Information and Advice officer to undertake home visits and complete welfare benefit claim forms, particularly Attendance Allowance.
- 1 I&A volunteer – supporting older people to complete on line Blue badge applications in the office
- 2 Meet and Greet volunteers - these volunteers cover most of the office opening hours and deal with callers coming in to the office by signposting, providing information or active referral appropriate to the client’s enquiry.

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STAFF/VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Age UK Lancashire has a comprehensive mandatory training plan for both staff and volunteers. We have invested in a high quality online training resource via ME Learning which enables many more staff and volunteers to access up-to-date training and undertake courses at their convenience.

Regular meetings are held with all the volunteers to update them and provide general support. This last year we have concentrated on making sure they are familiar with the standards, policies and procedures set by the Information and Advice Quality Standard.

The volunteers have completed ME learning training on:

- Basic Life Support
- Safeguarding Adults level one
- Safeguarding Children level one
- Dementia Awareness
- Information Governance
- Mental Capacity Act

The Information and Advice Worker has undertaken training on:

- Pension Age Welfare benefits
- Social/Community Care
- Charity Log (in house Database)
- Information & Advice Quality Program training meetings
- The Care Act
- GDPR

QUALITY

We have worked very hard this year to achieve the nationally recognized Age UK Information and Advice Quality Programme (IAQP) and the nationally recognised Advice Quality Standard which is a rigorous and robust process to ensure we are delivering a service that meets all their requirements.

We continue to hold the bronze Investors in People Award, ISO 9001 and the Age UK organisational standard.

PROMOTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Some of the Fylde groups that we have supported over the last year include:

- Social Groups at Kirkham and Warton
- Fylde walking football

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- Fylde older peoples forum
- FAB group
- Just good friends, taking clients and befrienders to their groups
- St Anne's Soroptomists

Staff have attended local events and meetings to explain the service and generate referrals including the Macmillan well-being event and the Fylde dementia hub to provide information on services. We've attended meetings with Macmillan staff, GP practice managers, social workers and district nurses. We've contacted N-vision, Trinity Hospice, Cinnamon Trust, Lancashire well-being service, Salvation Army, Lytham Extensive Care team, and we work closely with the Fylde and Wyre CCG Public Patient Engagement Group to ensure our services are promoted locally.

CAMPAIGNS

Age UK Lancashire has supported the following national campaigns:

- Care In Crisis
- Winter Warmth and Winter Health
- End and Loneliness and Isolation
- Painful Journeys

DEVELOPMENT PLANS for 2018-19

- Will apply for funding from Eon, through Age UK nationally, to deliver welfare benefit checks for older people and to ensure they are getting any energy discounts they may be entitled to through 2018/19.
- Recruit, train, maintain and manage more I&A and Meet and Greet volunteers to support the service and manage the high demand for home visits to complete welfare benefits claim forms.
- To continue to seek funding for new services and projects
- We look forward to working under the leadership of a new Chief Executive, Teri Stephenson, who is joining us in late May 2018

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Case study – Mrs. W

We were contacted in October by Mrs. W's son for help completing an AA form. Mrs. W has had cancer, is bed bound and has later stage dementia so would be unable to attend the office or contribute to the form being completed. Her son came into the office and we completed the form. At that time he did not have all financial information to do a benefit check.

In January the son contacted me again as his father's health had deteriorated rapidly since he began caring for his wife. We undertook a home visit as Mr. W. was concerned about leaving his wife to attend an appointment at the office. Whilst there we completed an AA form for him, did a blue badge application, and carried out a benefit check. A care package was already in place for Mrs. W, with some of the carer's time being allocated for Mr. W (making sandwiches etc.). Carers were going in 4 x daily.

The benefit check showed there to be eligibility to £6.36 Pension Credit and £21.68 Council Tax Support per week. However, those figures were based on circumstances at that time and we advised that if awarded AA their eligibility would alter again.

As Mr. W is caring for his wife full-time, despite his own health problems, we suggested he apply for Carers Allowance – although he would only get the underlying entitlement it may increase eligibility to other benefits, and would not affect the SDP included in his wife's Pension Credit.

As the property is in council tax B, we advised him to contact the council about dropping a band as his wife has a hospital bed in the living room.

Outcomes

- Mrs. W awarded higher rate AA (as expected).
- Mr. W awarded lower rate AA (as expected).
- Mr. W awarded CA (underlying entitlement only)
- Pension Credit increased from £9.16 p/w to £153.37 p/w
- Council tax bill reduced to £5.16 for the year, though they will be re-banding the property from April so this should further reduce the bill to zero.
- Blue Badge granted.

Their overall income has increased by £282.96 per week, not including the council tax support (they weren't sure how much CTS they were already in receipt of)

Mr. W will be able to get out more now that he has a blue badge which will increase his independence and they are aware of where to go for Information and Advice in future.

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	12
YEAR-END PERFORMANCE 2017/18			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The report provides details of the key performance outcomes for the financial yearend 2017/18. Performance is reported against the targets set for the year and commentary is provided by performance exception.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Environment, Health & Housing team input data into the InPhase corporate online system from service based performance data

LINK TO INFORMATION

<http://fyldeperformance.inphase.com> - Full Corporate Performance suite for Fylde Council

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

The performance information is relevant to the committee terms of reference and the responsibility of the committee to monitor performance of the services within its remit.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Alex Scrivens, Performance & Improvement Manager (01253 658543 or alexs@fylde.gov.uk).

Year-end Commentary by Performance Exception for the Environment, Health & Housing Committee

***** PERFORMANCE ABOVE TARGET *****

Commentary is provided to explain why progress has exceeded target, with details of how this will be maintained.

PM106 Homelessness relieved (decision made to find accommodation) was 15 cases, last year's out turn was 4 cases, the target is 10 cases.

The Housing Team have been working to move long standing households out of interim and B&B accommodation within the last two quarters which has resulted in an increase in homelessness being relieved. These are households who are homeless and have had their situation relieved.

PM28: Number of households living in temporary accommodation is 8 cases and last year's out turn was 18 cases, the target was no more than 20 cases.

This is related to PM106 where the Team have focused on moving homeless households out of B&B and Interim accommodation which has resulted in a reduction in households living in temporary accommodation.

PM109 Percentage of food hygiene interventions completed (Category A to D) was 100% and last year's out turn was 100%, the target was 90%.

Food premise interventions are carried out in line with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Law Code of Practice (FLCop). The Code of Practice suggests that 100% of all interventions shall be completed in order to maximise benefits and safeguard public health.

PM25: Percentage of premises scoring 3 or higher on the food hygiene rating scheme was 93%, last year's out turn was 76%, the target was 85%.

The benefit to the business of having a higher score has become more important to the operators as a result of increased media awareness and choice based on scores by the customer. The operators across Fylde are working constructively with the food safety team to achieve the best scores they can.

***** PERFORMANCE BELOW TARGET *****

Commentary is provided to explain why performance is currently not on target, with details of any corrective action.

None to report.

PERFORMANCE KEY ICON STATUS

	Over Performance – the indicator is over performing against target
	On Track – the indicator is performing within tolerance of target.
	Cautionary Under Performance – the indicator is moderately under performing. Whilst the indicator has slipped from target it maybe a minor blip overall or minor action will remedy it.
	Under Performance – the indicator is under performing against target.
	Missing Data – the indicator is missing data, this could be due to lag in data in the way the information is collated, or because its currently unavailable.
N/A	Not Applicable – no comparable data available. This could be due to the methodology being change or being a new measure created.

APPENDIX 1: Performance Measures yearend performance (1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018)

Environment, Health and Housing						
Local Key Performance Indicators	Frequency	Good Performance Is	APR 2016 MAR 2017	APR 2017 MAR 2018	Year-end Target	Performance Status
PM104 Total cases homelessness prevented, able to remain in own home	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	31	28	30	
PM105 Total cases homelessness prevented, assisted to obtain alternative accommodation	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	31	26	28	
PM106 Homelessness relieved (decision made assisted to find accommodation)	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	4	15	10	
PM108 % of the total DFG Budget committed	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	104	100	100	
PM109 Percentage of food hygiene interventions completed (Category A to D)	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	100	100	90	
PM25: % of premises scoring 3 or higher on the food hygiene rating scheme	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	76	93	85	
PM28: Number of households living in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter	Quarterly	Smaller is Better	18	8	15	
PM29a: Total number of housing advice cases	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	355	517	500	
PM29c Total number of homeless presentations	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	84	89	90	
PM70: % of Licensing Act 2003 certificates issued within 3 working days of statutory time scale (Q)	Annual	Bigger is Better	100	100	100	
PM71c: Total % of hackney carriage/private hire vehicle & driver licenses issued within 3 days	Annual	Bigger is Better	100	100	100	
PM72: Percentage of statutory EPA Permitted process inspections completed (quarterly)	Annual	Bigger is Better	100	100	100	
PM73: Percentage of high risk "A" rated health and safety premise inspections completed (quarterly)	Annual	Bigger is Better	100	100	100	
PM97a: The length of time for applicants on the waiting list for a Disabled facility grant (weeks)	Quarterly	Smaller is Better	0	0	0	
PM99: Number households received financial assistance from the council to prevent repossession	Quarterly	Bigger is Better	32	30	30	

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JUNE 2018	13
CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT 2017/18 – OUTTURN POSITION 31st MARCH 2018			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

This report sets out details of expenditure on schemes within the Council’s approved capital programme for the financial year 2017/18.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The report is based upon information on capital programme expenditure on a scheme by scheme basis extracted from the Council’s financial ledger system for the period to 31st March 2018.

LINK TO INFORMATION

<http://www.fylde.gov.uk/council/finance/budget-monitoring/2017-18/>

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the Council’s approved Capital Programme as at the financial year-end, 31st March 2018. The Committee is directed to take particular note of those schemes which are under the Committee’s remit.

Further information on the financial outturn position for 2017/18 will be contained within the MTFS Outturn Report to the Finance and Democracy Committee in June 2018.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Paul O’Donoghue (Chief Financial Officer)
e-mail: paul.o’donoghue@fylde.gov.uk Tel: 01253 658566

CAPITAL OUTTURN 2017/18

KEY:	  	SCHEME DELIVERED TO BUDGET DURING THE YEAR SCHEME UNDERSPENT AGAINST BUDGET SCHEME OVERSPENT AGAINST BUDGET
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APPROVED SCHEMES	Financing Source	Latest Budget 2017/18 £000	Actual Outturn 2017/18 £000	Variance £000	Variance	See key	Slippage Requested £000	Comments
<u>FINANCE & DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE</u>								
Accommodation Project - Phase 6 & 7 - Council Chamber & Internal Refurb / Services	Proceeds from the sale of surplus Council Assets, and the Accommodation Project Reserve	500	500	0	On target	☺	0	The completion of these phases of the scheme, within the approved budget, marks the completion of the internal refurbishment and modernisation of the Town Hall. This has been a major capital scheme, delivered over a number of years, resulting in much improved office accommodation and fit-for-purpose meeting rooms and Council Chamber.
Sub total		500	500	0			0	
<u>TOURISM & LEISURE COMMITTEE</u>								
Fairhaven Lake & Promenade Gardens	Capital Investment Reserve / Direct Revenue Finance	113	108	5	On target	☺	5	Half of the project funding was expected to be required during 2017/18. This level of funding has not actually been required and the balance will now be used in 2018/19, subject to the slippage request being approved.
Development of Play Area - Bridges Playing Field, Warton	S106 Developer Contributions	107	107	0	On target	☺	0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
Fleetwood Road Playing Fields, Wesham	S106 Developer Contributions	25	25	0	On target	☺	0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
Mussel Tank Project	Specific Grant (LSA Civic Society)	130	130	0	On target	☺	0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
Sub total		375	370	5			5	

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APPROVED SCHEMES	Financing Source	Latest Budget 2017/18 £000	Actual Outturn 2017/18 £000	Variance £000	Variance	See key	Slippage Requested £000	Comments
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE								
Replacement Vehicles	Capital Investment Reserve / Borrowing / S106 Developer Contributions / Direct Revenue Finance	1,316	1,297	19	Underspent		19	An operational vehicle, of a bespoke specification, was not delivered to the Council by the year-end. Slippage is requested in this regard and the vehicle is now expected to be received in the early part of the financial year 2018/19.
Fylde Headlands Preliminary Work	Specific Government Grant (Environment Agency)	8	8	0	On target		0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
Public Transport Improvements	S106 Developer Contributions	18	18	0	On target		0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
Fairhaven and Church Scar Coast Protection Scheme	Specific Government Grant (Environment Agency) / Capital Investment Reserve	2,825	2,995	-170	Overspent		-170	Although grant for this scheme may be claimed three months in advance of it being expended, grant may not be claimed beyond the financial year end date. There has recently been an accelerated spend on the scheme towards the end of financial year 2017/18 and the balance of the associated grant was claimed early in the new financial year. Expenditure forecasts will continue to be reviewed as the scheme progresses and adjusted as necessary.
Sub total		4,167	4,318	-151			-151	

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APPROVED SCHEMES	Financing Source	Latest Budget 2017/18 £000	Actual Outturn 2017/18 £000	Variance £000	Variance	See key	Slippage Requested £000	Comments
ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE								
Disabled Facilities Grants Programme	Specific Grant (Better Care Fund) / External Contributions / Grant repayments	1,255	1,010	245	Underspent		245	This budget has seen a significant increase in central government funding during 2016/17 and 2017/18 which has facilitated the clearance of the backlog / waiting list for disabled facility works. The slippage of £245k reflects the residual balance from 2017/18. An annual monitoring report on DFG's is due to be considered by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee at its next meeting. The £245k is fully allocated and represents the on-going work within the section. The slippage has allowed the service to continue into the current financial year as the Council are still awaiting confirmation and receipt of the 2018/19 DFG allocation.
Housing Needs Grants	DFG Grant Repayments	8	8	0	On target		0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
93 St Albans Road - Compulsory Purchase Order	S106 Developer Contributions	99	89	10	Underspent		0	The scheme has been completed (purchase of the asset) in 2017/18 with a minor underspend.
Affordable Housing Scheme - 93 St Albans Road Refurbishment	S106 Developer Contributions	56	56	0	On target		0	The first phase of the scheme has been completed to budget during the year.
Affordable Housing Scheme - Sunnybank Mill, Kirkham	S106 Developer Contributions	460	460	0	On target		0	The first phase of the scheme has been completed to budget during the year.
Affordable Housing Scheme - Church Road Methodist Church, St Annes	S106 Developer Contributions	275	0	275	Underspent		275	There has been a delay in the transfer of land from the Methodist Church to Great Places Housing Association. The scheme has been awaiting approval from Regional Methodist Church Circuit, which is now expected soon, allowing the scheme to progress in 2018/19, subject to the slippage request being approved.
Affordable Warmth Scheme	Specific Grant (Lancashire County Council)	46	15	31	Underspent		31	The Affordable Warmth Scheme is an ongoing programme funded by Lancashire County Council (LCC). LCC have confirmed that the scheme will continue in 2018/19. The slippage requested is expected to be fully-utilised in 2018/19, if approved.
Sub total		2,199	1,638	561			551	

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APPROVED SCHEMES	Financing Source	Latest Budget 2017/18 £000	Actual Outturn 2017/18 £000	Variance £000	Variance	See key	Slippage Requested £000	Comments
PLANNING COMMITTEE								
Woodlands Road Regeneration Scheme - Town Centre Phase 3	Capital Investment Reserve / S106 Developer Contributions	6	6	0	On target		0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
St Annes Regeneration Schemes	S106 Developer Contributions	170	162	8	Underspent		8	This scheme relates to the refurbishment of St. Andrews Road South in St Annes. It was anticipated that the scheme would be completed by the end of the 2017/18 financial year. However, with the onset of adverse weather conditions in March 2018 the scheme was not fully completed. It will, however, be completed by the end of May 2018.
Staining Regeneration Schemes	S106 Developer Contributions	40	40	0	On target		0	The scheme has been completed within the approved budget during the year.
M55 Link Road - design works	S106 Developer Contributions	387	279	108	Underspent		108	This scheme relates to the detailed technical design of the proposed link road. This work is progressing and payment is being made in stages as work is completed rather than as an upfront payment. Accordingly payments will be spread across two financial years and slippage into 2017/18 in the sum of £137k is now requested. The design works are due to be completed by June. Subject to overall funding agreements being in place tendering by LCC for construction of the new road is due in autumn of 2018.
Sub total		603	487	116			116	
Total Expenditure		7,844	7,313	531			521	