



Meeting Agenda

**Policy Development Scrutiny Committee,
Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes
Thursday 3 February 2011, 6:15pm**

The main doors to the Town Hall will be open to the public at 6:00pm
The maximum capacity for this meeting room is 60 persons –
once this limit is reached no other person can be admitted.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMAN	Fabian Craig-Wilson
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Kiran Mulholland

Councillors

Brenda Ackers	Ben Aitken
George Caldwell	Frank Andrews
Patricia Fieldhouse	Richard Fulford-Brown
Craig Halewood	Leonard Davies
John Davies	Karen Henshaw JP
David Chedd	Elizabeth Oades
Elaine Silverwood	Heather Speak

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Our Vision

Fylde Borough Council will work with partners to provide and maintain a welcoming, inclusive place with flourishing communities.

Our Corporate Objectives

- To Promote the Enhancement of the Natural & Built Environment
 - To Promote Cohesive Communities
 - To Promote a Thriving Economy
- To meet the Expectations of our Customers

The Principles we will adopt in delivering our objectives are:

- To ensure our services provide value for money
- To work in partnership and develop joint working



A G E N D A

PUBLIC PLATFORM

*To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with
Committee procedure rules*

ITEM	PAGE
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: <i>If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest he/she is advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of Members an extract from the Councils Code of Conduct is attached).</i>	4
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: <i>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee held on 6 January 2011. As attached at the end of the agenda.</i>	4
3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: <i>Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3</i>	4
4. NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME	6 - 28
5. PARTNERSHIP WORKING ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10	29 - 34
6. POLICY REVIEW: OPERATION OF THE MAYORALTY	35 - 52
7. FYLDE COAST CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME	53 - 131
8. REVIEW OF ASSETS	132 - 134

Personal interests

8.—(1) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either—

(a) it relates to or is likely to affect—

- (i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) any body—
 - (aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

- (i) any employment or business carried on by you;
 - (ii) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
 - (iii) any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
 - (iv) any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
 - (v) any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi);
 - (vi) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
 - (vii) any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
 - (viii) any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant;
 - (xi) any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or
- (b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b), a relevant person is—

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1)(a)(i) or (ii).

Disclosure of personal interests

- 9.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (7), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
- (3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the authority of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

- (5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.
- (6) Subject to paragraph 12(1)(b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.
- (7) In this paragraph, "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000(d).

Prejudicial interest generally

- 10.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
- (2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business—
- (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8;
 - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8; or
 - (c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of—
 - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
 - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
 - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
 - (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
 - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
 - (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Prejudicial interests arising in relation to overview and scrutiny committees

- 11.—** You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—
- (a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
 - (b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

Effect of prejudicial interests on participation

- 12.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority—
- (a) you must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held—
 - (i) in a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
 - (ii) in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;
 unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's standards committee;
 - (b) you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and
 - (c) you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.
- (2) Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	3/02/2011	4

NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

Public Item

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

Summary

Support from elected Members is being sought for Fylde Borough Council to introduce the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to be run in partnership with the Food Standards Agency.

The scheme is designed to provide consumers with information about hygiene standards of food premises which is determined from the most recent food hygiene inspection. The rating reflects the level of compliance with legal requirements.

Safeguards are incorporated to ensure fairness to businesses. These include an appeals procedure; a 'right to reply' for publication with the hygiene rating and; a mechanism for requesting a re-inspection/re-visit for the purposes of re-rating.

Recommendation

To consider and make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That the introduction of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is endorsed
2. That the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Policy is adopted

Reasons for recommendation

To provide residents and visitors to Fylde Borough information that will enable informed choices about hygiene standards in food premises.

To provide an incentive for businesses to improve food hygiene standards in order to comply with regulatory requirements and to assist officers in the regulation of food businesses.

The scheme is likely to become mandatory for all local authorities and at present early adopters are eligible for funding which may not be available for those choosing to adopt the scheme at a later date.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not adopting the scheme will result in the loss of an opportunity to improve hygiene standards by incentive.

Residents may be deprived of the enhanced capacity to make informed decisions about where they eat or buy food.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Environment and Partnerships - Cllr Thomas Threlfall

Report

1. Fylde Borough Council received funding from the Food Standards Agency in February 2010, to assist with the implementation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. At that time, businesses were contacted by mail as an introduction to the scheme and were provided with information to form an overview.
2. Preparatory work is continuing with a view to a Borough-wide launch on 1st June 2011 with the premises risk ratings providing an accurate reflection of food hygiene standards at that point in time.
3. Activities already undertaken in preparation for the scheme include file and database checks and database cleansing, development of a communications strategy, development of appeals procedure and establishment of a consistency framework for the operation of the Scheme.
4. The Council is now approaching a formal sign up with the Food Standards Agency, for which we will agree to implement and operate the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in accordance with the 'Brand Standard'.
5. The Food Standards Agency is providing a support package including guidance and officer training to ensure a consistent approach to risk rating, a communications toolkit, marketing and promotional materials, national promotion of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and the IT platform / IT support.

6. The scheme is to include restaurants, takeaways, cafes, sandwich shops, pubs, hotels, supermarkets and other retail outlets, as well as any other business where consumers can eat or buy food and/ or drink.
7. There are six different hygiene ratings ('0' up to '5') – with '5' representing the highest level. Ratings for all businesses will be published on www.food.gov.uk/ratings and they will be encouraged to voluntarily display certificates and stickers at their premises for public viewing.
8. Establishments will continue to be rated at each inspection, in accordance with the Council's Food Safety inspection programme, and these hygiene ratings will reflect the degree to which it complies with the standards prescribed in 'The Food Law Code of Practice' set under the Food Safety Act 1990.
9. The operation of a single national scheme is expected to ensure clarity for consumers and greater consistency for businesses.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Sara Carrington	(01253) 658627	18/1/2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Common Sense, Common Safety (Lord Young)	October 2010	http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/402906_CommonSense_acc.pdf
The Food Standards Agency 'Brand Standard'		http://www.fylde.gov.uk/meetings/details/878/

Appendices

1. Communications Strategy
2. Fylde Borough Council Draft Policy for the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
3. Agreement for Implementation and Operation the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The adoption of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme has no direct financial implications, although there are resource implications for the implementation and delivery of the scheme. Such implications will be delivered within existing revenue budget provision.
Legal	<p>Data Protection Act 1998</p> <p>Freedom of Information Act 2000</p> <p>Environmental Information Regulations 2004</p> <p>The Food Law Code of Practice</p> <p>Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006</p>
Community Safety	No direct implications arising from the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
Human Rights and Equalities	Safeguards to be in place to ensure fairness and equality to all businesses
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	A balanced approach to regulating Food Hygiene as part of a sustainable community is promoted through the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	Any implications arising from enforcement activity will be managed operationally.

Fylde Borough Council National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Communications Strategy

Fylde Borough Council is required to promote equality of access, open, honest and transparent communications.

It is our vision:

- To ensure effective communication with all stakeholders both within and outside the Council

Within this we aim:

- To support the provision of high quality services by ensuring the widest possible access for stakeholders across any media at the time
- To ensure that accurate and reliable information that reflects identified customer needs is available to all stakeholders at all times

1. Introduction

Fylde Borough Council was in receipt of funding from the Food Standards Agency to assist with the implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. At that time, businesses were contacted by mail to inform the intent of the Council to sign up to the scheme and the implications for their business.

The Council is now approaching a formal sign up with the Food Standards Agency and need to step up communications with businesses and also plan the promotion of the scheme and information for the public.

2. Overall Programme/Project Objectives

The primary purpose of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is to enable consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat out or shop for food and through this, to encourage businesses to improve hygiene standards.

Fylde has approximately 700 businesses that will fall within the scope of the scheme.

Success of the scheme will depend on effective and timely communication with consumers and businesses both on a local and national basis.

3. Communications Objectives

Businesses:

- To increase the awareness and understanding of the FHRS

- To motivate food businesses to improve food hygiene standards and achieve high ratings.
- To encourage food businesses to display their FHRs rating

Consumers:

- To introduce the FHRs and raise its profile
- To raise awareness about food hygiene matters when consumers are dining out or shopping for food
- To educate consumers to observe and monitor ratings of the food business they plan to visit either by looking online or on view at the premises

4. Key Message per Target Audience

For businesses:

- The scheme will be a good advertisement for businesses that comply with food hygiene law – good food hygiene means a good hygiene rating and a good hygiene rating is good for business
- It is already a legal requirement for businesses to meet hygiene regulations
- Having the six different ratings gives businesses room to improve
- The FSA and Fylde Borough Council have the tools to do this.

For consumers:

- The FHRs enables you to make an informed choice about where you choose to eat or shop for food. The FHRs will reflect the food hygiene standards that are maintained in areas not routinely on view to the public.
- You can view the rating of the place where you choose to eat or shop by checking the sticker in the window, the certificate on display inside the premises or by going online at www.food.gov.uk/ratings
- Explain the meaning of the ratings
 - Fylde Borough Council inspects businesses and rates them on their hygiene standards
 - The standards found at the time of inspection are rated on a scale
 - At the bottom of the scale is '0' – this means urgent improvement is required. At the top of the scale is '5' – this means the hygiene standards are very good.

5. Communications Mix

We will utilize the following:

External Communications Mix

Press

- Press releases to Local press and local radio stations.
- Fylde in Focus
- Fylde Matters

Online

- Fylde Borough Council Website
- Fylde Borough Council Intranet

Print

- Posters
- Letters
- Leaflets
- Safer Food Better Business
- FSA Information and website
- Council Policies
- Committee Reports

Other Available Arenas

- Fylde Direct
- Tourist Information
- Businesses
- Mailings
- Briefing Notes
- Telephone calls
- During routine food hygiene inspections

Internal Communications Mix

- Intranet
- Briefing notes
- Email

6. Promotion

Level	Stakeholders	Information	Tools	Arena	Timescale
1. Initial Communication	Food Business Operators (FBO's)	General information informing that the national scheme has been agreed. Information leaflet from FSA. Information gathering form to check premises details.	FSA Information	Mailings	Feb / March 2010
	Food Business Operators	Follow up to details returned, chase up any not returned	None	Telephone calls	March / April 2010
	Members	Committee Report and related documents	FSA Information	Briefing Notes	February 2011
	Staff	General information to aid with any enquiries received	FSA Information	Internal Communications	February 2011
2. Communication on formal sign up	Food Business Operators	Notification of when the scheme is to be launched and what businesses will be included in the initial launch. Those premises included will also receive self assessment tools for scores on the doors and notification of their rating, enabling time for appeals / queries and right to reply	Council Policies FSA Information Safer Food Better Business	Mailings, Routine Inspection Visits	February / March 2011
	Residents Members FBO's	More detailed information relating to timescales for the implementation, methods and how the scheme works. Information leaflets and posters for public buildings and any FBO's willing to display.	FSA information Council Policies Posters Leaflets	Fylde Matters Fylde in Focus Website Intranet Mailing to FBO's One stop shops Press Releases	March / April 2011
	All Stakeholders	Information about the launch date, method of implementation and general promotion of the scheme	FSA Information Council Policies Posters Leaflets	Press Releases Website Intranet Fylde Matters One Stop Shops (including scripts) Posters in Businesses	April 2011
3. Launch	Food Business Operators	Drop-in sessions to provide one on one information and guidance about businesses individually	FSA Information Officer knowledge Remote Access to Civica Community Settings (village halls / church halls etc.)	Mailings to FBO's Press release Website One Stop Shops Posters	May 2011
	All Stakeholders	System to go live (provisionally) 1 st June 2011	Posters FSA Information Leaflets	Press release Website	May / June 2011

7. Budget

The communications and marketing costs will be kept to a minimum, utilising the FSA prescribed information, taking advantage and maximising the use of the *free materials, such as certificates and stickers. Officers will also promote the FHRS during routine visits. The communications timetable enables the costs to be kept to a minimum and also reach a maximum target audience. It is noted that the majority of costs will be absorbed through daily service provision.

*Note the materials are only free if using only the single branded stickers/certificates. If it is chosen to add Fylde Borough Council's logo there will be a one off set up fee. See appendix for the branded materials available.

BRANDING MATERIALS

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

Stickers

Examples for the rating of '3' are used. There are two options for stickers:

- 1) FSA logo plus statement 'this scheme is operated in partnership with your local authority; and
- 2) FSA logo and space for the local authority logo to be added by the commercial printer/supplier.



Certificates

Examples for the rating of '3' and 'awaiting inspection' are provided

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

0

1

2

3

4

5

GENERALLY SATISFACTORY

NAME OF BUSINESS
ADDRESS OF BUSINESS

Date of hygiene rating
4 JUNE 2010


Contact details
FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE

Authorising signature

For more information about the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme visit food.gov.uk/ratings

The food hygiene rating shown above reflects the standards found on the date of inspection or visit by the local authority. Ratings are given on a scale from 0 (urgent improvement necessary) up to 5 (very good). The rating is not a guide to food quality.

CITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY
COUNCIL


Food Standards Agency
food.gov.uk/ratings

This certificate remains the property of the local authority which reserves the right to remove it at any time.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

AWAITING INSPECTION

NAME OF BUSINESS
ADDRESS OF BUSINESS

Date issued

4 JUNE 2010

Contact details

FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE
FILL IN DETAILS HERE

Authorising signature

For more information about the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme visit food.gov.uk/ratings

The business named above will be given a food hygiene rating when it is next inspected by the local authority. Ratings are given on a scale from 0 (urgent improvement necessary) up to 5 (very good). The rating is not a guide to food quality.



This certificate remains the property of the local authority which reserves the right to remove it at any time.

Fylde Borough Council

National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Policy

Introduction

The aim of the scheme is to publish food hygiene criteria for premises selling food to the public; this information will be found on the Council's website and displayed (currently voluntarily) at the premises by the owner.

Background

The Council has a statutory duty to carry out a programmed inspection plan of food premises. This is a risk based scheme, prescribed by the Food Law Code of Practice. At the conclusion of each inspection, the officer is required to leave a written report of inspection; this should state any contraventions to food safety legislation. Those premises with more than a couple of contraventions may receive confirmation of these in a letter containing the full breakdown of contraventions along with the actions required to meet compliance. Many premises strive to maintain high standards of compliance, whilst others tend only to meet the minimum standards. The inspections are then risk rated and given a numerical score, the higher the score, the more frequently the department will visit.

Purpose of the Scheme

1. The National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) has two distinct advantages for the Council:
 - The ratings will be published on the Food Standards Agency website (which will be accessible via a link from the Fylde Borough Website). This will enable the local community and visitors to the area to make an informed decision about what premises they choose to visit, which is a service we currently cannot offer.
 - It is also envisaged that food businesses will strive to raise their hygiene standards and maintain compliance.

The scheme will consist of various measures to ensure consistency including a consistency policy, officer training and information on scoring and self-evaluation for businesses. This will ensure that all scores are as accurate, consistent and fair, as possible.

Legislation and Guidance:

Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
Environmental Information Regulations 2004
Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 3
The Food Safety Act 1990

Scoping

The national scheme extends to establishments supplying food direct to consumers; restaurants, cafés, take-aways, schools, care homes, food retailers etc. Certain premises will have an exemption to the scheme these include low-risk premises that are not generally recognised as being food businesses by consumers and childminders and caring services within private addresses. These premises will be listed as exempt on the website.

Inspections

In line with the Food Law Code of Practice, a risk rating can only be changed following a full inspection, partial inspection or audit of the food business, all other available interventions do not give provision for change of risk rating.

Following the intervention, a receipt of inspection or a letter containing all of the following information will be included:

- Details of why the establishment was rated as it was and, in cases where the top rating has not been achieved, what priority actions are needed for each of the three Annex 5 (the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006) elements (Confidence in Management, Hygiene Compliance and Structural Compliance) in order to improve the level of legal compliance.
- Contact details (name and telephone number) for the inspecting officer and the Principal Officer Commercial Team.
- A weblink to food.gov.uk/ratings where more general information on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (including information on the re-inspections / re-visits and appeals mechanisms, template forms for requesting a re-visit, for lodging an appeal, and for submitting a 'right to reply'). Food Business Operators may also request a hard copy of this information.

The Ratings- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The scores will be calculated using the following elements of the 'food hygiene intervention rating scheme' at Annex 5 of The Food Law Code of Practice:

- Level of (current) compliance with food hygiene and safety procedures (including food handling practices and procedures, and temperature control),
- Level of (current) compliance with structural requirements (including cleanliness, layout, condition of structure, lighting, ventilation, facilities etc.), and
- Confidence in management / control procedures.

Each of the above elements is numerically scored against the relevant criteria on the basis of guidance given in the Food Law Code of Practice and are mapped into the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as illustrated below.

The ratings are carried out at the time of inspection and the rating will be awarded and posted online within 14 days from the date of inspection.

Mapping of Inspection Risk Rating to the National Scheme						
¹ Annex 5 Scores	0-15	20	25-30	35-40	45-50	>50
² Additional Scoring factor	No score > 5	No score > 10	No score > 10	No score > 15	No score > 20	-
Tiers	Top	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Bottom
Food Hygiene Rating	5	4	3	2	1	0
Descriptor	Very Good	Good	Generally Satisfactory	Improvement Necessary	Major Improvement Necessary	Urgent Improvement Necessary

¹ The sum of the three elements in the code of practice

² None of the individual elements may have a score greater than that shown

Display of Ratings

There will only be current ratings displayed on the website; historical ratings will not be available.

Food Business Operators will be issued with a sticker / certificate with the relevant rating score. The sticker remains the property of Fylde Borough Council and its authorised staff will have the right to remove existing stickers and issue new ones.

Re-Inspections / Re-visits for Re-Scoring Purposes

The process is applicable following a planned intervention (an inspection, partial inspection or audit) where a hygiene rating has been given. If non-compliances were identified during the intervention, the Food Business Operator may make a request to Fylde Borough Council to be re-assessed with a view to receiving a higher rating. The Operator may only request one re-inspection / re-visit per programmed inspection, and must be made aware that the hygiene score may go up, down or remain the same. In line with the Food Law Code of Practice the re-inspection / re-visit must take the form of a full inspection, part inspection or audit to enable the rating to be revised, if deemed appropriate.

The request must be in writing (including email) with the case for re-inspection / re-visit being outlined. The request must include the actions taken to rectify the non-compliances that were identified at the planned intervention. Supporting evidence must also be provided. A standard form to request re-inspection / re-visit is available on the Council's website or available upon request from the Commercial team.

If the Food Business Operator has not substantiated the need for a revisit or insufficient evidence is provided to Fylde Borough Council, it is likely that the request will be refused. In doing so, the inspecting officer will explain why the request is being refused at this stage and will re-emphasise the priority actions that must be taken in order to improve the legal level of compliance. Advice will be provided by request in relation to what evidence is needed, before agreement to a re-inspection / re-visit. If the Food Business Operator disagrees with the Inspecting Officers decision, the issue can be raised with the Principal Officer Commercial Team,. If the matter cannot be resolved, the food business operator has the right to follow Fylde Borough Council's complaints procedure.

An inspection / re-visit may not take place within 3 months of the programmed inspection and must be carried out within 3 months of the request being made. Therefore the longest period a food business operator will have to wait for the re-inspection / re-visit should be 6 months. If a visit is not carried out within the three month window, the Food Business Operator can raise the issue with the Principal Officer Commercial Team there is also recourse to Fylde Borough Council's complaints procedure. Certain circumstances will allow for the Inspecting Officer to carry out the visit within the 3 months following the programmed intervention. This will only apply to cases where the non-compliances identified have since been rectified and concerned only the need for permanent structural improvements or repairs or the upgrading of equipment.

Poorer performing establishments which have a re-visit scheduled in the normal course of follow up action in line with Fylde Borough Council's enforcement policy, may have their rating changed if an assessment is made of overall compliance at the time of re-visit.

Currently, there are no statutory powers to enable local authorities to charge for the re-inspection / re-visits carried out as part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. However, the Food Standards Agency are not opposed to this in principal and are considering the possibility of this for the future.

Appeals

To ensure fairness to businesses, an appeals process is in place to dispute scores if it is considered to be unjust. All Food Business Operators must be notified of the score at the time of intervention or without undue delay and within 14 days. In the case that the Food Business Operator considers the score to be unjust they have the right to appeal initially informally to the inspecting officer (promoted, although not a pre-requisite), then formally to the Principal Officer Commercial Team within 14 days of the score being notified.

Right to Reply

Food Business Operators will have a 'right to reply' which will be published on the website with the score. The purpose is to enable the Food Business Operator to give an explanation of subsequent actions that have been taken to rectify non-compliances or mitigation for the circumstances at the time of inspection, rather than to complain or criticise the scheme or 'inspecting officer'

Comments will be accepted electronically and in writing using a prescribed form which Fylde Borough Council reserve the right to edit text in order to remove any offensive, defamatory, clearly inaccurate or irrelevant comments.

Complaints

If the Food Business Operator is still dissatisfied the Council's formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Communications and Marketing

See Communications Strategy

Monitoring and Review

All scores to be uploaded will be checked and verified before publishing. Should an inaccuracy be found in the scoring, procedures will be in place for informing the Food Business Operator, amending the score and issuing an amended sticker / certificate.

The published information will also be monitored to ensure accuracy, if any are found to be inaccurate, they will be removed and the above procedures followed.

The Food Business Operator will then have 14 days in which to appeal the new score.

All authorised officers will undertake consistency training (provided by the Food Standards Agency) to ensure the validity of scoring given to businesses.

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically by the Head of Public Protection Services.



FOOD HYGIENE RATING

[Name of LA Chief Executive/Council or Portfolio Leader]

Fylde Borough Council

[Address of LA]

[Date]

THE AGREEMENT

Dear [Name of LA signatory],

Implementation and operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

This letter of agreement is to confirm that Fylde Borough Council agrees to implement and operate the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in accordance with the 'Brand Standard' set out in 'The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme: Guidance for local authorities on implementation and operation – the 'Brand Standard'.

The Agreement comprises this letter and the appended 'Outline of Responsibilities'. Details of the process for terminating the Agreement are also appended.

You are requested to indicate your acceptance of this Agreement by signing both copies of this letter and returning them to the address below as soon as possible.

One copy will be signed on behalf of the Agency and returned to you.

Signed: (On behalf of the Local Authority)	Signed: (On behalf of the Food Standards Agency)
Name (Print):	Name (Print):
Position:	Position:
Date:	Date:

Aviation House
 125 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6NH
 Email: hygieneratings@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk



Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) – Outline of responsibilities

Fylde Borough Council undertakes to:

- Follow in full the Food Standards Agency's (FSA's) guidance on the FHRS - the 'Brand Standard'; and
- Give early warning of any emerging problems to the FSA so that advice and support may be offered to ensure that the credibility and integrity of the FHRS is not compromised.

The Food Standards Agency undertakes to:

- Keep the guidance for local authorities on the implementation and operation of the FHRS under review as the scheme beds in and to revise and update it as and when appropriate to reflect the experience of local authorities, any feedback from food businesses or from consumers, or other developments;
- Work with local authorities to resolve situations where they encounter difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities to follow in full the FHRS 'Brand Standard' in order to ensure that the credibility and integrity of the scheme is not compromised;
- Provide and maintain the central database and on-line search facility for publishing food hygiene ratings and provide the associated IT support and training;
- Provide other support such as promotion of the FHRS to consumers and to businesses through appropriate channels;
- Monitor and audit the implementation and operation of the FHRS to ensure the consistent interpretation and application of the 'Brand Standard' and to work with local authorities to resolve any issues identified through this; and
- Conduct a formal evaluation of the FHRS after it is rolled out and within an appropriate timeframe.

Intellectual Property Rights

Any intellectual property rights (IPR) created during or resulting from the work to support the FHRS shall remain the property of the party by whom or on whose behalf the particular IPR were created.

Data protection

The parties confirm that they will observe their respective obligations in respect of the Data Protection Act 1998. Any data and information introduced by a party to support the work of the FHRS shall belong to that party.

Information access legislation

Both parties acknowledge that the other party is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and each party will assist and cooperate with the other party to enable both parties to comply with such information disclosure obligations and to meet the necessary statutory deadlines.

FHRS - process for termination of Agreement

Note – The aim will be to resolve any problems or issues through informal discussion and that the processes outlined below will be used in exceptional circumstances only.

Prior notice

Where the local authority is considering terminating the agreement, it should give at least 14 days¹ prior notice to the FSA.

Where the FSA is considering terminating the agreement, unless there are immediate risks to public health protection, it similarly will give at least 14 days prior notice to the local authority.

In both sets of circumstances this provides a further opportunity to work together to try to resolve any issues/concerns and, where appropriate, to discuss whether additional support can be provided to allow the local authority to continue operating the FHRS.

Notification

Where the local authority has decided to terminate the agreement, it should notify the relevant FSA Director in writing outlining the reasons for this.

Where the FSA has decided to terminate the agreement, the local authority will be notified in writing of the FSA's decision and the reason for this. The local authority can appeal this decision – see below – but it should be noted that termination of the agreement is not suspended during the period in which such an appeal can be made or pending the outcome of an appeal once lodged.

Actions following termination of Agreement

Irrespective of which party terminates the agreement, the following steps must also be taken to ensure that the credibility and integrity of the FHRS is not compromised and to ensure that the reputations of the FSA, of the local authority concerned, and the businesses in the relevant area are safeguarded.

The FSA will:

- immediately notify stakeholders that the local authority is no longer participating in the FHRS by means of an announcement at [food.gov.uk/ratings](https://www.food.gov.uk/ratings) on both the home page and on the local authority's own page;
- immediately suspend the local authority's access to the national database so that no further ratings can be published; and
- within 14 days, remove the local authority's existing ratings from public access;
- notify the local authority when these steps have been taken.

¹ Where references to numbers of 'days' are made these includes weekends and bank holidays.

The local authority will:

- If it also publishes ratings on its own website, immediately notify local stakeholders that the authority is no longer operating the FHRS by means of an announcement on an appropriate website page, and within 14 days, remove any published ratings from its site;
- remove any FHRS branding from its website;
- suspend distribution of any marketing and advertising material that incorporates FHRS branding;
- remove stickers/certificates from display in food business establishments as soon as possible and at the next planned intervention of that establishment at the latest;
- advise businesses in the area that the FHRS no longer operates and that the continued use of any branded materials for marketing and advertising purposes may constitute an offence under trading standards legislation; and
- confirm to the FSA that these actions have been taken.

Local authority appeals

If a local authority considers that the FSA decision to terminate the Agreement is unjust it may appeal against this. The process is as follows:

- The local authority can, within 14 days from the date of notification of termination, ask for the matter to be referred to an Advisory Disputes Panel (see box below).
- The Advisory Panel will be convened and will investigate the matter and report its findings and recommendations within six weeks.
- The FSA will review the Panel's report and within 14 days will notify the local authority of its decision as to whether it accepts the Panel's view.
- If the local authority remains dissatisfied its Chief Executive can within 14 days request that the dispute be referred to the FSA's Chief Executive.
- The FSA's Chief Executive will review the case and the Panel's report and issue a final decision that will be notified to the local authority within 14 days.

Advisory Disputes Panel

Membership will comprise representatives from or nominated by Local Government Regulation and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health as well as consumer and food industry representatives.

The Panel will elect its own chair.

The Secretariat function will be provided by the FSA.

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	3 FEBRUARY 2011	5

PARTNERSHIP WORKING ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

Public Item

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

Summary

At the December meeting of the Committee members considered the annual report on partnership working and concluded that in terms of those appointments to outside partnerships involving elected members that work was required to update the list of outside bodies as the continued operation of some was questioned. In addition, it was felt that it would be a useful exercise for the members involved in current partnerships to report on their value.

This work has been on-going. An updated list is attached and it is hoped that any gaps in information can be ascertained prior to the committee meeting.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note to updated list of partnerships together with the commentary from the elected members sitting on the respective partnerships about their effectiveness.

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Thomas Threlfall, Environment and Partnerships

Report

1. The Council's Policy for Partnership Working was approved by the former Corporate Policy Committee on 19th April 2004. The policy was one of a number of

Continued....

2. At the December meeting the Committee considered the annual report on partnership working and concluded that in terms of those partnerships involving elected members that work was required to update the list of partnerships as the continued operation of some was questioned. In addition, it was felt that it would be a useful exercise for the members involved in on-going partnerships to report on their value.
3. This work has been on-going. An updated list is attached and it is hoped that any gaps in information can be ascertained prior to the committee meeting.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None arising from this report
Legal	None arising from this report
Community Safety	None arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Tracy Scholes	(01253) 658521	24 January 2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

Attached documents

1. Summary of Member Partnership Working

Outside bodies/partnerships attended by elected members	Councillor	Number of meetings per annum	Comments
Age Concern	Cllr Little	4	Meetings tend to be dealt with at an officer level with Councillor Little being briefed on any issues arising as necessary.
Blackpool Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr Fiddler		Status of appointment to be confirmed
BFW Volunteering Centre	Cllr Jacques	6	Although no funding is provided from the council, representation provides an opportunity to learn what is being provided for residents
BAe Engineering Systems	Cllr Threlfall		Status of appointment to be confirmed
Clifton Lytham Housing Association			This partnership will cease after completion of sale
Community Safety Partnership	Cllr Little	4	Very good value (VFM) for money provided by the partnership– open and transparent meetings, minuted
Consortium of Lancashire Aerospace	Cllr Fiddler		Status of appointment to be confirmed
Council for Voluntary Services, BWF	Cllr Pounder	12	Input into this organisation enables the perspective of Fylde residents to be considered
Face to Face Homeless	Cllr Singleton	0	FBC pays £28k which funds an officer to operate rent bond scheme, PPPP which has the effect of preventing 100+

Fylde Arts Executive Committee	Cllrs Jacques / Henshaw / Harper	4	<p>people presenting as homeless and needing housing which is very good VFM. The SLA states that there will be 4 meeting pa, but these have never taken place because Housing are constantly in touch with them and receive regular data and update reports. David Gillet states that they are due to start discussions about renewing SLA – this would be good opportunity to start holding the meetings as agreed in SLA</p> <p>Cllr Harper has commented it is useful to attend this outside body to keep a watching brief</p>
Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau	Cllrs Ackers, Hardy and Nulty		<p>Cllr Nulty attends the management committee on a regular basis. This partnership provides a brilliant service at a low cost to the Council in Councillor Nulty's view. The organisation benefits from the advice and support of many volunteers who act on an unpaid basis. These volunteers are very knowledgeable and provide help and support to the most vulnerable people living within the Fylde.</p>
Fylde Community Projects Fund	The Mayor	3	<p>To nominate funding for Fylde community groups who meet criteria. Funding is met entirely by the LSP.</p>
Kirkham Baths Management Committee	Cllr Fazackerley	5 / 6	<p>Formal arrangement, condition of handover (Rural Splash) Fundraising is a large part of committee discussion, community representatives attend</p>
Lancashire Economic Partnership Forum	Cllr Fiddler		<p>Status of appointment to be confirmed</p>

Lancashire Waste Partnership	Cllr Pounder	4	This is a networking partnership, exchanging news and good practice. Cllr Pounder considers it to be a good use of his time
LCC Adult Social Care & Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Fulford-Brown		It is a statutory responsibility for the County Council to scrutinise health provision in Lancashire and each District Council is invited to nominate a representative to sit on this outside body
Local Liaison Committee Springfield Works	Cllr Threlfall	4	Status of appointment to be confirmed
LSP Executive	Leader		Formal minuted meetings which provide good outcomes for Fylde in terms of allocation of funding to Fylde projects
Lytham Town Trust	Cllr Ashton		Status of appointment to be confirmed
Progress Housing	Cllr P Rigby		Cllr Rigby was nominated by Council as Board member
North West Employers Organisation	Portfolio Holder – Cllr Pounder	6	This is a networking group exchanging news and good practice. Councillor Pounder considers this a good use of his time.
Ormerod Trust	Cllr Jacques	2	Although the Council provides no direct funding to the Trust Cllr Jacques helps them on a personal level with fund-raising. Also, keeps abreast of resources available to Fylde residents, LCC involvement
Ribble Discovery Centre	Cllr Little		An interesting appointment which keeps Councillor Little apprised of issues

District Youth & Community Liaison Connexions Advisory			Should be deleted from records
Blackpool Fylde & Wyre Society for the Blind			Should be deleted from records
Fylde Police & Community Forum			Should be deleted from records
St Annes on Sea Development Partnership			Should be deleted from records
Valuation and CT Tribunals			Should be deleted from records
West Coast Rail 25 Campaign			Should be deleted from records
Kirkham Museum			Should be deleted from records

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	3 FEBRUARY 2011	6

POLICY REVIEW: OPERATION OF THE MAYORALTY

Public Item

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

Summary

The Council has a written policy encompassing procedure notes for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Mayoral Team to follow in each mayoral year. It is intended that this policy is kept under review. A copy of the policy is attached with some amended wording to consider at paragraph nine.

The amended wording suggests limiting the number of mayoral events attended at an average number based on recent years in order that the mayoral budget can be managed effectively. Members may wish to consider if the number of events attended by the Mayor should be limited, or capped at a higher level (which would require a budgetary increase) or in light of budget reductions across the Council, if the extent of mayoral engagements should be reduced.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to consider the Policy on the operation of the Mayoralty in particular reference to the extent of engagements accepted by the Mayor.

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Karen Buckley, Finance and Resources

Report

1. The Council has a written policy encompassing procedure notes for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Mayoral Team to follow in each mayoral year. It is intended that this policy is kept under review. A copy of the policy is attached with some amended wording to consider at paragraph nine.
2. In April 2009 a Task and Finish Group was set up to review the mayoralty with regard to its role in today's society, the effectiveness of the current operation and its value for money and were asked to identify service improvements and recommend to Council accordingly. This T&F Group recommended that this service should continue to be funded by the Council as it is well respected by the local community, considered to be effective and judged at the time to represent good value for money.
3. The amended wording within the Policy suggests limiting the number of mayoral events attended at an average number based on recent years in order that the mayoral budget can be managed effectively. Members may wish to consider if the number of events attended by the Mayor should be limited, or capped at a higher level (which would require a budgetary increase) or in light of budget reductions across the Council, if the extent of mayoral engagements attended should be lower.
4. The seniority list is also contained as an appendix to the report and this has been updated for member's information.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The extend of engagements accepted by the Mayor has an impact on staffing costs
Legal	None arising from this report
Community Safety	None arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Tracy Scholes	(01253) 658521	24 January 2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

Attached documents

Policy on the Mayoralty



Operation of the mayoralty

Title of Policy	Operation of the mayoralty
Purpose of Policy	A written policy encompassing procedure notes for the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and Mayoral Team to follow for each mayoral year
Date of Policy	December 2007 (Cabinet approval November 2007)
Policy Review Date	December 2009 Amended February 2010 Amended February 2011
Policy Author	Tracy Scholes, Director of Governance and Partnerships

Introduction

This policy has been produced to set out procedures for the operation of the mayoralty.

Throughout the mayoral year, the mayoral support staff will aim to ensure that the Mayor and other Civic representatives receive suitable support and advice in order to undertake their year in office to the full and that the work undertaken benefits both the office of Mayor and the people of Fylde.

The Governance and Partnerships Directorate, which is managed by Tracy Scholes, provide the support for the Mayoralty. The mayoral team is managed by Ian Curtis, Head of Governance, and comprises Anne McVittie, the Mayors Secretary, Alan Blundell, Mayors Attendant/Driver and Jo Christensen, Casual Mayors Attendant/Driver. There is also a further Attendant/Driver employed on a casual basis

The mayoral team provides administrative support to the Mayor together with attendant services at engagements.

As soon as nomination for the mayor elect has been approved by Council, the mayoral staff will invite the Mayor-Elect, Mayoress\Consort-Elect, Deputy Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayoress\Consort-Elect to an induction meeting. This is the chance for the team to outline the provisions of this policy to the Mayor and outline what support can be expected during the mayoral year.

1. Selection of the Mayor

The method of selection of the Mayor is based on seniority of service and the most up-to-date seniority list is attached. If in an election year the Mayor-Elect is not re-elected, the position will be offered to the next councillor on the list and if declined, the list will be followed until an acceptance of the position is made.

If a member becomes eligible for office on the seniority list but declines the position it will be ascertained if they wish to decline the position permanently and if they do so, their name will be placed at the bottom of the list with this intent stated. However, if they wish to decline the position for one year only, their name would appear at the top of the list the following year.

Once a member has held the position of Mayor they will not be eligible to hold the position again.

In years where a number of members become eligible for the office in the same year it is recommended that they should decide between themselves the order in which the position should be held. If no agreement is reached, the current Mayor will conduct a draw to determine the order of office.

If a member, having previously stated that they do not want to be considered for the position subsequently has a change of circumstances and decides that they wish to be included within the seniority list, they will be inserted into the list at a position agreed by the Leader and the Chief Executive.

In the case where a member has broken service in terms of length of office, the member will re-join the list at the most recent term of office to which they were elected, but will be elevated to a higher ranking than those others elected at the same time.

2. Role and Functions of the Mayor

These are described in Article 5 of the Constitution as follows:

(a) First Citizen

The Mayor has precedence in and is the first citizen of the Borough

(b) Promotion of the Council

The Mayor promotes the Borough and the Council as a whole and acts as a focal point for the community

(c) Ceremonial Matters

The Council is responsible for determining the civic and ceremonial duties that the Mayor is to carry out.

(d) Chairman of the Council

The Mayor presides over meetings of the Council.

Within Fylde, the Mayor takes precedence over all others except the Queen and certain members of the Royal family. In addition H.M. Lord Lieutenant for the County and the current High Sheriff being, in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, also enjoy precedence over the Mayor. On occasions of Royal visits to the Borough the purpose of which is not directly associated with the borough, H.M. the Queen, in exercise of the Royal Prerogative, has directed that the Chairman of the County Council and his/her partner, and the County Chief Executive and his/her partner be presented to the Royal Personage immediately before the Mayor and Mayoress. Where the purpose of a Royal visit is purely a municipal matter, the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough will take precedence over any County Council representatives.

Formal introductions should be made as, "The Worshipful the Mayor of the Borough of Fylde". On less formal engagements the correct introduction is "the Mayor of Fylde" and when speaking to the Mayor, the correct form of address is "Mr Mayor", even if the Mayor is female.

3. Role and Functions of the Deputy Mayor

These are described in Article 5 of the Constitution as follows:

If the Mayor is away, the Deputy Mayor discharges the roles, functions and responsibilities of the Mayor

The Deputy Mayor-Elect is chosen personally by the Mayor-Elect and acts in the Mayor's absence. He/she is not entitled to wear either the Mayoral Robes or the Mayor's Chain of Office but is provided with a Chain of office, which they will be responsible for during their year in office.

Protocol states that the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort should not wear the chain of office when in the company of the Mayor, unless permission has been granted by the Mayor. This in practice is usually given at Civic functions hosted by the Mayor in the Town Hall.

4. Mayoress\Consort

The Mayor appoints the Mayoress or Consort personally and the Mayoress or Consort wears a chain of office when performing duties.

5. Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor may appoint a Chaplain to provide spiritual support during the year of office. This includes opening Council meetings with a prayer, saying grace at Civic Dinners and planning and officiating at the Civic Sunday Service.

6. Impartiality

When performing his\her duties, the Mayor represents the whole of the Fylde community and should be seen to be impartial on matters, which might be considered controversial by some such as politics and religion.

7. Main Events in the Mayoral Calendar

(i) Annual Council Meeting\Mayor Making Ceremony

The Council will elect the Mayor, at each Annual Meeting of the Council, which usually takes place in May in Lowther Pavilion. Although this is a formal meeting of the Council, the primary purpose of the meeting is to appoint the Mayor and Deputy and as a consequence this meeting is often referred to as 'Mayor Making'.

As this is in main a ceremonial occasion, there is a wide invitation list to the event and hospitality is provided. In addition to all Councillors and partners, the following guests are invited: Honorary Aldermen, former Mayors, former Mayoress and consorts, MP and guest, County Councillors for the Fylde and guests, Parish and Town Council Chairpersons and guests, local organisations and businesses, Mayor's personal guests (up to 60), Deputy Mayors personal guests (up to 40), Chaplains (outgoing and incoming) and visitors from the twin town of Werne if this coincides with a visit to the Borough.

During the Annual General Meeting, arrangements will be made for the Halberds to be removed from the outgoing Mayor's home and they will be installed at the incoming Mayor's home.

The council finances the mayor making ceremony apart from any photographs which the Mayor Elect may wish to request which should be financed from the Mayor's Allowance.

(ii) Civic Sunday

The Civic Sunday Service and Parade is usually organised shortly after the Annual meeting. Administrative support will be provided for the organisation of this event by the Mayoral Team. However, as this is the Mayor's personal service, the content of which he\she should decide upon with the Mayor's Chaplain.

The Council finances Civic Sunday expenses.

(iii) Armistice Day - 11.00am - 11 November

Events to mark the 2 minutes silence on the 11th November will be arranged and will be attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (in attendance at differing locations).

(iv) Remembrance Sunday and Parade – Second Sunday in November

Services will be held in the morning in Lytham and St Annes and will be attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. A Service will normally be held in the afternoon in Kirkham and will be attended by either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor.

(v) Mayoress at Home

Date and venue to be determined by Mayoress and Mayor's Secretary (this event is paid for out of the Mayoral Allowance).

(vi) Royal Garden Party

Two invitations are extended to the Council in each year for attendance at the Royal Garden Party. One of these invitations is extended to the Mayor Elect for he/she and his/her guest to attend the event (or the Deputy Mayor Elect as their representative). The Mayor Elect is able to choose in order of preference from three dates offered for the annual attendance at the Royal Garden Party, although he/she may not be offered his first choice.

The Mayoral Team will make travel arrangements to and from London for the Mayor Elect and Mayoress/Consort Elect through the most cost-effective means.

8. Chairing Council Meetings

As the person presiding at meetings of the Council, the Mayor has the following particular responsibilities. He/she is assisted by the Deputy Mayor:

- To uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and to interpret its provisions and give rulings on points of order as and when necessary
- To conduct the meetings of the Council in such a way that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of all Councillors and the interests of the community
- To ensure that the Council meeting can be a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and a place at which Councillors who are not members of the Executive Cabinet are able to hold the Cabinet to account.

9. Official engagements

A wide variety of invitations will be received during each year and, due to volume, it is inevitable that some must be declined. It is therefore of paramount importance that engagements should be prioritised where possible.

An official engagement is one for which the Mayor's Secretary has received an official invitation from the host of the function. There should be a role for the Mayor to perform and it must be in keeping with the dignity of the office. Invitations made to the Mayor in person either written or oral must not be accepted; instead the invitation must be made in writing to the Mayor's Secretary. The Mayor must not solicit invitations to events, as this would undermine the dignity of the office.

The Mayor is supported in the attendance of events by the Deputy Mayor and it is at the discretion of the Mayor as to precisely which invitations are to be passed to the Deputy Mayor. A small travel allowance is included within the budget for the Mayoralty to supplement the provision of the Council's own mayoral car. However, as this is a minimal budget, the number of engagements attended by the Deputy Mayor where official transport is provided are extremely limited and the Deputy Mayor is requested to use his/her own transport. This should be a factor for any member to take into account when considering if they wish to accept the position of Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor's Secretary will regularly update and issue the Mayoral Calendar, which lists all the engagements accepted during the Mayoralty.

It is preferable that the Mayor should leave in advance of the last guests at any event. However protocol dictates the Mayor should not leave a dinner, except by arrangement, before the toast to the guests has been proposed and responded to. When an engagement is accepted, a conclusion time for the event is indicated on the engagement form. Recognition needs to be taken of the Working Time Directive, which stipulates there should be no continuous working in excess of six hours and this is applicable to the Attendant/Driver.

Taking into account the level of invitations received there needs to be agreed guidance on the value or quality of different types of engagements.

The National Association of Civic Officers has undertaken research into this subject, and has produced a set of performance indicators relating to each engagement attended. They have concluded that every invitation received must fall within one of seven major types of activity: -

- **Social** – work colleagues, fellow councillors etc.
- **Community** – attending events such as local amateur dramatics, sports clubs, church group's etc.
- **Promoting**– Council initiatives, tourism etc.
- **Civic Hosting** – Receptions, buffets dinners in connection with community and promoting.
- **Charities** – fundraising events
- **Civic Circuit** – visiting other authorities, Civic services, Balls, tours etc.
- **Council/Ceremonial** – Chairing Council Meetings, Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday etc.

These broad headings can be broken into smaller units without altering the meaning of them.

The National Association of Civic Officers suggest that the list is placed in the following order of priority and the Council endorses that each engagement should be scored as indicated. The engagements scoring the highest are those supporting the community leadership and promotion, thereby contributing to raising the reputation of the council or which are community and corporate plan objectives. If two invitations are received for the same date and time, priority should be given to the one scoring the highest in terms of the ranking (obviously this would not be possible if one had been received far in advance of another and already accepted). The Mayors Secretary will give guidance in these circumstances.

• Civic Circuit	1
• Social	1.5
• Charities	2
• Council/Ceremonial	3
• Civic Hosting	3
• Community	5
• Promoting	5

The average number of events attended by the Mayor and Deputy from 2007/08 was 296 and in 2011/12, the number of events attended by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor will be restricted to this number in order to ensure that the mayoralty operates within budgetary limits. Engagements accepted should also be weighted towards community or promotional events within the Borough boundaries with at least one in four of all engagements fulfilling this criterion. Events outside the Borough should be restricted to ensure that the focus of the work of the Mayor is on community development work within the Borough and raising and promoting the work of the Council to its residents.

10. Late engagements

Invitations to events or functions are normally received well in advance. This allows the Mayor, his/her support staff and the wider Business Unit to properly plan and organise the Mayor's time and provides a proper framework for the operation of the mayoral office.

If an invitation for an engagement is received less than seven working days prior to the event it will not be considered, unless the Mayor's Secretary perceives that the engagement is of major importance to the Borough, as the Mayor is entitled to expect that event organisers will extend him/her the courtesy of allowing for adequate time to be allocated and for staffing arrangements to be made.

11. Mayoral Charities

During the year in office the Mayor may wish to raise funds, and organise fund raising events in aid of nominated charities.

Although charity fundraising is not one of the Council's Corporate Objectives it is a worthwhile activity, but should be kept in context. The extent of the charitable events in a mayoral year is at the discretion of the Mayor.

At the earliest opportunity the Mayor Elect should seek a meeting with his/her nominated charities (in particular if these are local charities) and seek their support in organising any additional charity events, which might be sought outside the support offered by the Mayoral Team. The Mayoral Ball is usually the largest event of the fund raising year and the date and venue are determined by the Mayor and Secretary at an early date.

12. Mayor's Official Photograph for Members' Room

Shortly after the Annual Council Meeting, arrangements will be made by the Mayor's Secretary for a local photographer to come into the Town Hall for a photo-sitting in the Mayoral robes for the Mayor to select the official Mayoral portrait. The Council will finance the cost of the official photograph.

13. Official Photograph of Council

If the Mayor wishes to have an official photograph of Council during his Mayoralty, the Mayor's Secretary will arrange for a local photographer to take one. Copies will be available for the Mayor and Councillors to purchase from the photographer.

14. Biography

The Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect are requested to forward biographical details to the Mayor's Secretary as soon as possible after the confirmation of their appointment. Brief details of the Mayoress and Deputy Mayoress/Consort would also be useful. These will be shown on the Council's website and circulated to the Press.

15. Chains of Office and Robes

The Chains of office should be worn at all official engagements within the Borough and for all full Council Meetings. The Mayor's Attendant is responsible for the maintenance and security of the Chains of office worn by the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort. The Chains of Office are to be stored in a safe place as agreed by the Executive Manager taking on the requirements of the Council's insurers.

When attending an engagement outside the Borough of Fylde permission to wear the Chains of Office must be sought from the Mayor (Mayor's Office) of the area to be visited. The mayoral team will seek this permission prior to the visit. There is however, an agreement between the Boroughs of Fylde, Blackpool, Preston and Wyre that the Mayor of one of these Boroughs has automatic permission to wear the Chain of office in either of the neighbouring Boroughs. The chains should not be taken on engagements where their security could be put at risk, for example, trips abroad or far afield when unaccompanied by the Attendant/Driver.

The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort will be responsible for their own chains of office during their year in office.

The Robes may be worn at all Council Meetings and at all functions where the Mace is carried, e.g. Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday Services. There may be occasions when the Mayor is asked specifically to wear the Robes, i.e. a visit to the Town Hall from a school etc. The Mayor always has discretion whether or not to wear the Mayoral robes on any of these occasions.

16. Mayoral Car

The Council will provide a chauffeur-driven mayoral car for the use of the Mayor and Mayoress for all official engagements. The Mayor's Attendant will drive the car and act as chauffeur. This car is also for the use of the Deputy Mayor in the absence of the Mayor.

Attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace is the exception to this arrangement as outlined earlier in this document.

The mayoral car is for use on official engagements and care must be taken not to allow inappropriate use of the vehicle. However, when attending an official engagement, the Mayor, at his/her discretion, may offer use of the car to another person attending the engagement.

The Attendant is responsible for the regular cleaning and checks of the vehicle. He/she will ensure that the car at all times reflects the highest standards of cleanliness to the bodywork and interior.

The Mayoral car may, subject to relevant regulations, display the Borough coat of arms pennant when on official engagements within the Borough. The pennant must never be displayed unless the Mayor is present in the vehicle and must be removed as soon as the Mayor leaves the vehicle. It would be correct to display the pennant for the Deputy Mayor when deputising in the absence of the Mayor.

The overnight location/storage of the Mayoral car is determined by a Risk Assessment which takes into account the safety of the Driver/Attendant balanced against the security of the car. This Risk Assessment is the responsibility of the Head of Governance and must be adhered to. If there is an opportunity to house the mayoral car at the Mayor's home during the mayoral year, this should be raised prior to the commencement of the mayoral year to allow for a Risk Assessment to be carried out and the location agreed by the Head of Governance.

17. Mayor's Parlour

The Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall is for the official sole use of the Mayor during his/her year in office. It is used for providing hospitality to the Mayor's guests, and for official meetings and briefings at which the Mayor is present. Meetings with the Mayor's Secretary will take place in the Parlour. Before the Parlour is used by any other person or for any other purpose, permission must be sought from the Mayoral Team.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor's Parlour will be locked at all times.

18. Mayor's Attendant

The Attendant has a duty of care for the Mayor's wellbeing at all times.

The Attendant will be available to accompany the Mayor (or Deputy if he/she is deputising for the Mayor) on all official engagements and will be responsible for the security of the Mayoral Chains of Office at all times. The only exception to this would be whilst attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace when the Attendant is not admitted to the Palace grounds.

The Attendant will maintain at all times, whilst on duty, a clean and smart appearance. He/she will be well mannered and courteous but prepared to be firm, and intervene when the situation demands.

The duties of the Attendant are many and varied, but in broad terms it is the responsibility of the Attendant to ensure that the Mayor arrives punctually at engagements. While at the function the Attendant will ensure that the Mayor is formally introduced to the host and afforded the appropriate precedence. The Attendant will then be on hand to advise on matters of protocol and tradition and will undertake any other duties, which may arise, within the parameters of his/her role, including taking photographs at engagements.

The Attendant is also the Borough Mace-Bearer and will precede the Mayor on all appropriate ceremonial occasions.

19. Mayor's Secretary

The Mayor's Secretary provides administrative support to the Mayor. This includes dealing with all incoming and outgoing mail, organising the diary, producing mayoral itineraries and submitting press releases. The Mayor's Secretary is part of the wider Governance and Partnerships Directorate and the Mayor is asked to respect that her duties sometimes extend beyond that of purely dealing with mayoral administration.

The Mayor's Secretary will also undertake duties outlined in association with the Mayor's Charities which will include raising sponsorship, banking cash and administering the Mayors charity accounts.

The Mayor's Secretary will discuss with the Mayor all new invitations received each week through a means convenient to the Mayor (for example, telephone or face-to-face meeting). A time will be arranged for this meeting each week and this meeting is held in the Mayor's Parlour. The Mayor's Secretary will offer advice on the suitability and priority of all invitations in line with this Policy.

In addition, the Mayor's Secretary will organise the main civic events, which were outlined earlier in this document.

The Mayor's Secretary will work predominantly office hours.

20. Speeches

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the Mayor is advised when a speech is required at an engagement (the Mayoral Engagement form should indicate this), there are occasions when the Mayor is called upon to say a few 'impromptu' words. It is therefore important that the background information available has been read beforehand.

21. Mayoral Allowances

Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are provided with an allowance each year to support their year in mayoral office. This increases each year with inflation. This is supplemental to the standard member's allowance which they receive as a member of the Council. This budget is provided each year through the budget setting process.

The Mayor's Secretary will provide guidance on what the allowance should be used for. Examples of how this money is expended include clothing purchases, hospitality at events such as cocktail parties and photographer for the annual meeting.

In addition to this, the Mayor's Secretary is budget holder for other areas, which support the mayoralty, such as transport costs for the mayoralty. Whilst the Mayor is not directly responsible for these budgets there is an expectation that the Mayor's Secretary will update the Mayor on the spend against these budgets and the Mayor will act within the parameters of these budgets. The Mayor's Secretary will run through these budgets with the Mayor at the commencement of the mayoral year and will periodically report on these budgets to the Mayor through the briefing meeting process.

22. Website

The Council's website contains pages for the Mayor. These normally carry the Mayor's biography, photograph, weekly engagements and links to the Mayor's charities. The Mayor may also use his pages as an on-line journal of his activities and impressions during his year in office. The Mayor's Secretary will ensure that any material is posted on the website

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAYORALTY		
SENIORITY LIST – JANUARY 2011		
	COUNCILLOR	DATE ELECTED
1	LIZ OADES (Mayor 2010-2011)	1991
2	LOUIS RIGBY (has already been Mayor in 91/92)	1976
3	HOWARD HENSHAW	1995
3	TOM THRELFALL	1995
5	GEORGE CALDWELL (has already been Mayor in 95/96)	1973 (broken service 1979-1983)
6	TIM ASHTON (excluded himself from draw with Liz Oades in 2010)	1991
7	ROGER SMALL	1997
8	DAWN PRESTWICH (has already been Mayor in 97/98)	1977
9	JANINE OWEN	1999
9	LINDA NULTY	1999
9	HEATHER SPEAK	1999
9	PETER HARDY	1999
9	JOHN L. COOMBES	1999
9	BARBARA PAGETT	1999
9	KEVIN EASTHAM	1999
9	SIMON RENWICK	1999
17	PAUL HAYHURST (has already been Mayor in 2000\1)	1979
18	PATRICIA FIELDHOUSE (has already been Mayor in 2001\2)	1979
20	CHRISTINE AKEROYD	2002
21	MAXINE CHEW	2003
21	ELIZABETH CLARKSON	2003
21	PETER COLLINS	2003
21	RICHARD FULFORD-BROWN	2003
21	KEITH HYDE	2003

21	ALBERT POUNDER	2003
21	FABIAN C. WILSON	2003

28	TREVOR J. FIDDLER (has already been Mayor in 2004\5)	1979 (broken service 1995-99)
29	KEITH BECKETT	1983 (broken service 1986-2007)
30	KAREN HENSHAW	2003 (broken service 2007-2010)
31	BRENDA ACKERS	2007
31	BEN AITKEN	2007
31	KAREN BUCKLEY	2007
31	DAVID CHEDD	2007
31	MICHAEL CORNAH	2007
31	JOHN DAVIES	2007
31	BARBARA DOUGLAS	2007
31	DAVID EAVES	2007
31	TONY FORD	2007
31	CRAIG HALEWOOD	2007
31	KATHLEEN HARPER	2007
31	KEN HOPWOOD	2007
31	ANGELA JACQUES	2007
31	CHERYL LITTLE	2007
31	ELAINE SILVERWOOD	2007
31	JOHN R. SINGLETON	2007
47	SUSAN FAZACKERLEY (has already been Mayor 2008/9)	1987
48	LEONARD DAVIES	2009
49	PAUL RIGBY (has already been Mayor 2009/10)	1987
50	JOHN BENNETT	1976 Does not wish to be considered for Mayoralty (Declared Dec 1994)
51	KIRAN MULHOLLAND	1991 Does not wish to be considered for Mayoralty (Declared August 2009)

REPORT

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
COMMUNITY SERVICES	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	3 RD FEBRUARY 2011	7

FYLDE COAST CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

Public Item

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

Summary

Choice Based Letting (CBL) is a framework for allocating social rented properties owned by housing associations and councils to potential tenants in housing need.

This report considers the Fylde Coast sub-regional CBL scheme and in particular seeks approval for:

- 1) A new Allocation Scheme for the Council which sets out who will get priority in the letting of affordable housing in the Borough. The Allocation Scheme comprises a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy.
- 2) A 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) The project costs and approval to 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.

Recommendations

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that:

1. The new Allocation Scheme for the borough is adopted.
2. The Partnership Agreement is entered into as soon as a final draft has been agreed by the Council's legal officer.
3. The CBL system is procured as outlined in this report.
4. The set-up and running costs of the new CBL system are agreed as outlined in this report.

Reasons for recommendation

The scheme will provide an improved service to potential applicants through a single process that reduces duplication. It will provide for the Council a lawful, robust and transparent allocations scheme and improves the effective use of the stock of social rented housing in the borough

Alternative options considered and rejected

There is no alternative sub-regional CBL scheme in place and the Council is required by law to publish an allocation scheme.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:
Social Wellbeing Councillor Cheryl Little

Report

Background

- 1.1 In 2008 the Communities and Local Government (CLG) provided £100,000 funding to assist with the implementation of a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme across the Fylde Coast. The three Fylde Coast local authorities, together with five housing association partners and Blackpool Coastal Housing, have been working together over the last three years to agree the working arrangements and policies necessary to introduce the new scheme.
- 1.2 As members are aware, the current position in respect of allocations to social housing in Fylde Borough is as follows:
 - Fylde BC does not hold a housing waiting list (other than for those accepted as homeless) and does not allocate directly to the social housing stock in the Borough
 - Fylde BC retains nomination rights and exercises these specifically where

a S106 agreement is in place in conjunction with a nominations agreement. Nominees are drawn from the waiting list held by New Fylde Housing (NFH) and the Council's list of homeless applicants.

- The Fylde BC allocation scheme has not been reviewed since transfer of the social housing stock in 2000.
- Housing associations in the Borough manage their own separate housing waiting lists and allocate to these directly, some through their own existing choice based lettings schemes.
- The access to social housing can be cumbersome and bureaucratic as there are 14 housing association providers in the Borough.

1.3 There is a clear need to update and improve the existing arrangements and the opportunity to be part of a sub-regional CBL scheme will enable the current shortcomings to be addressed.

1.4 In November 2009, the Cabinet resolved:

- I. To commit to the detailed development of the CBL scheme
- II. To approve the apportionment of costs, with FBC's costs to be funded by virement from within existing budgetary provision
- III. 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.
- IV. 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.

This report seeks that final approval.

1.5 Since November 2009, the new allocations policies have been further developed and they have been refined through public consultation. A summary report of the consultation is attached at Appendix 1, of which extracts are outlined in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7

1.6 The consultation undertaken involved:

- Three stakeholders events during the period Sept 2009 to July 2010
- A twelve week statutory consultation period from June to October 2010 which included consultation with current social housing tenants, and current waiting list applicants
- A second public consultation exercise from November 2010 to December 2010 where over 9,000 information booklets and questionnaire were distributed to applicants on the housing registers held by the partner housing associations

1.7 The outcomes from this extensive consultation can be summarised as:

Stakeholders:

- General agreement with the scheme objectives
- The suspension criteria and banding criteria are easy to understand however it was noted that the policy did contain a lot of jargon which required definitions.
- There was agreement that the area lettings plans were clear and easy to understand
- Comments were made on some inaccuracies in the policy which have subsequently been resolved.

General Public:

- 88% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the draft Consistent Assessment Policy is easy to understand
- 86% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the banding criteria are easy to understand.
- 88.5% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the proposed banding system.
- 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the creation of Band E.
- 86% of respondents agreed that the new system will give priority to people who are most in need of housing.
- 87% of respondents answered that the policy was clear.
- 65% of respondents agree or strongly agree that people from neighbouring boroughs can apply for accommodation in their area.
- Telephone, the internet and in person were the preferred methods of making a bid.
- 96% of respondents agree with the priorities in the area lettings plans

1.8 From these results it can be concluded that there is now a broad consensus on the proposed new Allocation Scheme.

1.9 Fylde BC is required by law to have an Allocation Scheme in place that sets out how social housing will be allocated within its area. The new policies associated with the Allocation Scheme will meet this statutory requirement.

1.10 Further work has also taken place to develop the new CBL system operationally, to identify a preferred provider of the IT system and allocate associated costs.

Reasons for Introducing a Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings System

1.11 Part of the Council's housing role is to assess and plan for housing needs across all tenures, to make best use of existing stock to meet need and to plan and facilitate new housing supply. In order to undertake this role effectively robust information on housing need is required. The sub regional CBL scheme will provide relevant information to the Council to enable it to fully undertake this role. In addition the introduction of a new Fylde Coast CBL System responds to:

- Government promoting (and in the case of the Fylde Coast, largely funding) sub-regional CBL as best practice
- The need for a high quality web-based system that will provide increased choice and information to applicants, allowing them to have a better understanding of stock

- The need to improve access to social housing through a single application process. The new CBL scheme will mean that if people want social housing, they can go to any one provider within the scheme and complete one application form. The applicants' details are then available to all the social landlords. Once registered, applicants will have access to information on all social rented properties and will be able to see the results of bidding through a range of media. The system will also form the basis for advertising a wider range of housing options; it is intended that further development of the system will enable accredited private rented properties and low cost home ownership options to be advertised alongside social housing.
- Improving efficiency - applications are only processed once instead of each organisation processing similar applications from the same applicants.
- Ensuring that all social rented properties are let in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. Instead of the existing housing association properties being offered through 'nominations' from local authorities, the majority of housing association properties will be allocated in accordance with the Allocation Schemes that all partners, including local authorities and housing associations, are involved in shaping.
- Making the best use of homes by providing a register of people with disabilities and of adapted and other appropriate housing. The new system will be designed to ensure that vulnerable customers are not disadvantaged when accessing housing and that equal opportunities are promoted.
- Assisting local authorities to deliver the priorities set out in their statutory Allocation Schemes, and providing a constant source of information on the demand for social rented housing in different areas and how social rented properties are being used.

Proposals

2 New Allocations Scheme

- 2.1 A new Allocations Scheme has been drafted for Fylde Borough Council. It is a statutory requirement for a local authority to have an Allocations Scheme in place that sets out who will receive priority in the allocation of affordable housing in the borough.
- 2.2 The new Allocations Scheme comprises a Fylde Area Lettings Plan (that sets out who should be given priority in the letting of different types of affordable housing in the borough); and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy (that sets out how applicants will be placed in different priority bands when they apply to join the housing register).
- 2.3 This means that Fylde BC, in partnership with our social landlords, will determine to whom social housing is let within the borough, and that there will be consistency across the Fylde Coast in how applicants for social housing have their needs assessed. The CBL system will assist Fylde BC in understanding and monitoring whether allocations are being made in accordance with the priorities set out in our

- 2.4 The Area Lettings Plan (Appendix 2) specifically details the requirement for a local connection to the Borough of Fylde. It also addresses known deficiencies in the social housing stock including low demand for some sheltered accommodation; access to social housing for young people; reduction of deprivation on social housing estates; accommodation for single people at or below retirement age and improved access to social housing for those households not in immediate housing need but in need of affordable housing.
- 2.5 Access to a full copy of the plan is also available on the scheme's website: www.fyldecoastcbl.co.uk
- 2.6 The Consistent Assessment Policy (Appendix 3) will be the same across the whole Fylde Coast. It is used to give people the correct priority band based on their circumstances. Properties are then allocated according to priority band, time on the register and local connection.
- Band A: is for those people in urgent housing need:- for example a vulnerable person leaving hospital with no suitable home to return to.
 - Band B: is for those people who have a high need for housing:- for example a need to move because of urgent medical or disability reasons.
 - Band C : is for those people who meet more than one criteria of band D
 - Band D: is for those people who have a medium need for housing:- for example are in need of one additional bedroom.
 - Band E : is for those people who are working / voluntary work
 - Band F: is for those people who do not have a local connection to the Fylde Coast or have a low housing need.
- 2.7 As well as housing need and time on the list, local people (from the three local authority areas) will be prioritised for housing. When it comes to letting a property partners will consider whether there is (1) connection with the local authority area (2) connection to the Fylde Coast Area and (3) no connection to either.
- 2.8 This means that if a property becomes available in Fylde then it will be offered to Fylde people first, according to the banding criteria. If no one from Fylde bids for the property it will then be offered to people in Wyre and Blackpool. If no one from the Fylde Coast area bids it will then be offered to those outside the area.
- 2.10 Properties in the rural parishes will only be let to households with a strong connection to that village as required within a section 106 agreement
- 2.11 Access to a full copy of the policy is also available at www.fyldecoastcbl.co.uk

3. Partnership Agreement to Implement a Fylde Coast CBL System

- 3.1 A Partnership Agreement has been drafted that sets out the responsibilities of each of the nine partner organisations in implementing and running the new Fylde Coast system. It is necessary to have a Partnership Agreement in place before a contract can be signed with the company who will provide the IT system that will operate the new Fylde Coast CBL arrangements.

- 3.2 The principles of the draft agreement have been agreed between officers representing all parties, but the final wording is yet to be approved by the legal advisors of all parties. Approval is sought to enter into a Partnership Agreement following confirmation that the Council's legal officer is satisfied with the final wording.

4. Project Costs and Contract with the IT System Provider

- 4.1 The budget for the capital costs to introduce the new Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings system is set out below:

Scheme - Set Up

IT System (incl VAT @ 20%)	£100,392
Project Management	£67,054
Consultation	£10,000
Training	£10,000
Publicity	£30,000
CLG Funding	-£100,000
Total	£117,446

Partner Contributions

Blackpool Borough Council	£67,054
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Balance to be Apportioned	£50,392
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Apportioned Costs	Billed Cost	Actual Cost (minus VAT)
Blackpool Coastal Housing (33.24%)	£16,753	£13,961
Wyre Borough Council (17.77%)	£8,957	£7,464
Fylde Borough Council (11.39%)	£5,741	£4,784
Regenda (14.72%)	£7,416	
New Fylde Housing (9.84%)	£4,959	
Great Places (7.54%)	£3,797	
Places for People (3.86%)	£1,943	
Muir Group (1.64%)	£826	
TOTAL	£117,446	

- 4.2 Fylde BC will be able to reclaim VAT on it's contributions as shown above.
- 4.3 The actual amount to be paid by each party will depend on the out turn costs. Costs of the IT system form the largest element and are based on a quotation from Abritas Ltd that is largely fixed. The process and rationale for the procurement of Abritas as the preferred provider are covered in Section 7 below. Consultation costs have largely been expended. The training and publicity costs are yet to be expended but include a sufficient amount to cover contingencies.
- 4.4 A major element of the capital costs are met by the funding of £100,000 that has been previously awarded by Government. Project management costs are being entirely met by Blackpool Council, as set out in the original bid to CLG. The

outstanding costs have been apportioned on the basis of the size of the social housing stock in each borough and managed by each social landlord. Apportioned costs will be payable when a contract is signed with the IT provider in March 2011.

- 4.5 The budget for the revenue costs of the on-going running of the system is set out below:

Annual Costs

	Year 1 (6 months from Sept 2011 – March 2012)	Year 2 (whole year 2012/13)
IT Hosting, disaster recovery and security	£5,348	£13,148
IT Support and maintenance	£1,660	£11,260
IT System Development	£1,660	£1,660
Additional consultancy	£3,750	£3,750
Total	£12,418	£29,818
Plus RPI uplift @ 5%	£12,418	£31,309
Plus VAT @ 20%	£14,902	£37,571
 Scheme Administrator Role	 £10,000	 £20,000
TOTAL COSTS	£24,902	£57,571
 Apportioned Costs		
Blackpool Coastal Housing (31.29%)	£7,792	£18,014
New Fylde Housing (9.26%)	£2,306	£5,331
Regenda (13.85%)	£3,449	£7,974
Places for People (3.63%)	£904	£2,090
Muir Group (1.54%)	£383	£887
Great Places (7.09%)	£1,766	£4,082
Fylde Borough Council (5.36%)	£1,335	£3,086
Blackpool Council (19.62%)	£4,886	£11,295
Wyre Borough Council (8.36%)	£2,082	£4,813
Total	£24,902	£57,571

- 4.6 These are estimated running costs, with the VAT on the IT element reclaimed by Fylde BC, reducing the total apportioned costs by around 11% from those shown above. The scheme administrator role will be undertaken by one of the partners, and the costs shown represent a maximum budget cost.
- 4.7 The anticipated set up and revenue costs have increased from the original estimates in 2009. A full scoping exercise for the IT system was undertaken in 2010 which identified additional service requirements.
- 4.8 The ongoing running costs have been apportioned between the partners based on the number of lettings undertaken by different landlords and in different areas, and will be reviewed each year based on actual numbers. The contribution to costs for Year 1 will be payable when the scheme goes live in September 2011.

- 4.9 Approval is sought to enter into a contract with Abrisas, detailed above, to commit to the contribution to the set-up costs as shown above, and to commit to meeting a proportion of the on-going running costs as shown in the budget above.

5. Risk Assessment

- 5.1 The principal risks are of rising costs, poor performance by the IT contractor, and lack of contributions from one or more of the partners. These have been mitigated by:
- Fixing the IT supply costs as much as possible before entering into a contract, and making prudent allowance for publicity and training costs
 - Procuring an IT contractor who is the market leader and has already supplied similar systems to a number of the partner organisations
 - Establishing a robust legal agreement between partners that will be signed before any contractual commitments are made with the IT supplier
- 5.2 There is also a legal risk in adopting the new allocations policies that the Council breaches statutory requirements. The Consistent Assessment Policy has been the subject of detailed legal advice from specialist legal counsel, and changes have been made to ensure that the Policy fully meets all legal requirements. The legal advice also included more general advice on ensuring that the CBL system meets statutory requirements and confirmed that each local authority has the flexibility under law required to introduce Area Lettings Plans as drafted.
- 5.3 A key component of the viability of the scheme will be for all partners and NFH specifically, to be formal partners to the scheme. If NFH were not to join, or withdraw, the Council would need to reconsider its position. Equally if another partner were to withdraw the Council would need to consider its position in relation to any redistribution of costs which may be required.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The implementation of the scheme represents a new function not previously included in the housing budget. All the costs (both set up costs and ongoing running costs) will be met from within the existing housing budget. For most partners the ongoing running costs associated with operating the new system should generally be no more than costs currently incurred, and the set up costs benefit from being subsidised by the £100,000 grant from Government.
- 6.2 Entering into a partnership of this nature enables Fylde BC to access a scheme which represents good value for money and provides significant service benefits.
- 6.4 The first contribution to the running costs of the scheme will be due in September 2011 and will be met by virement from within the existing housing budget.

7.0 Procurement

- 7.1 Abrisas Ltd has been identified as the preferred supplier of a web-based IT system for Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings scheme utilising a framework agreement led by the Northern Housing Consortium NHC). All of the Fylde Coast partners are

members of the NHC and the process followed by the NHC fully met all legal requirements.

- 7.2 The price offered by Abritas was the second lowest of the tenders submitted for the framework. On further investigation, the company offering the lowest price could no longer stand by their offer. A further discount from the price offered by Abritas to the NHC has been negotiated for the Fylde Coast contract. Abritas already provide choice based lettings software systems to a number of the Fylde Coast partners. Their systems are familiar to many staff and are known to be effective. They also have the capacity to deliver the Fylde Coast project within the timescales required.
- 7.3 An alternative procurement option would have been to undertake a new tendering process rather than using the NHC framework. However, the market for specialist software is limited, and it was unlikely that any new suppliers would have submitted tenders. It was also determined that further tendering would be unlikely to result in a lower price, especially as many new CBL systems are currently under development and there is limited capacity within the industry.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The requirements set out by Cabinet in November 2009 have been met. Formal support of all partners is being sought at the present time. The scheme has the support of stakeholders and the community as identified through the consultation work. Subject to agreement by all partners and on the wording of the Partnership agreement all elements for the implementation of the scheme are in place ahead of a go live date in September 2011.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
David Gillett	(01253) 658689	03/02/11	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

Attached documents

Appendix 1 - Consultation Report Summary
Appendix 2 - Proposed Fylde Area Lettings Plan
Appendix 3 - Proposed Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	No specific provision has been made within the existing revenue budget for the costs associated with the scheme. However it is anticipated that these costs would be found by virement from within the existing housing revenue budget
Legal	Being a partner of the Fylde Coast sub regional CBL scheme and associated Allocation scheme will fulfil the council's statutory duty to have a published and adopted allocation scheme.
Community Safety	There are no community safety implications
Human Rights and Equalities	The allocation scheme will require an equalities impact assessment to be undertaken
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	The sub regional scheme should contribute significantly to the sustainability of local communities through improved transparency of access to social housing stock
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are some risks associated with the development and implementation of the scheme as outlined in the report.

Appendix 1

Consultation Report For the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Scheme

(Summary document – excluding appendices which are
available at www.fyldecoastcbl.co.uk)



Working in Partnership with



Introduction

In 2008 a partnership of local authorities and registered social landlords was formed following the successful bid to the CLG (Communities and Local Government) for funding for a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme.

The sub regional scheme involves the following partners:

Blackpool Council
Fylde Borough Council
Wyre Borough Council
Blackpool Coastal housing
New Fylde Housing
Wyre Housing Association
Great Places
Muir Group
Places for People

As part of the proposed introduction of a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme across the Fylde Coast the partnership has worked on a single consistent assessment (CAP) policy to be used to assess applicants and allocate properties within the scheme. As part of the process this policy has been consulted on through several events which have shaped the body and style of this policy. The final draft policy was then put out to public consultation.

In addition to the CAP each local authority has also been working on area lettings plan (ALP). Whereas the CAP outlines how applications for housing will be assessed and processed the ALP defines the issues and priorities surrounding housing in each of the local authorities. The ALP was also covered in the consultation events and in the public consultation.

How We Consulted – a quick overview

In the early stages of the project it was recognised that a consistent assessment policy was vital to the success of the scheme and a working group was established. The working group involved representation from all of the partners and was tasked with producing a draft policy based on existing policies from within the partnership and on best practice. Throughout the consultation the group has fed the information from the consultation at each stage back in to the process of creating the CAP.

An initial event was held for stakeholders in September 2009, primarily as an information event to brief everyone on what had happened so far, where the scheme was and what was planned going forward. A separate event took place in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

A second event was held for stakeholders in March 2010, the purpose of which was to consult on the CAP and also to introduce the ALPs and start an initial consultation on those. This was a joint event held at Lowther Pavilion in Lytham.

A third event was held in July 2010, again for stakeholders, the main focus of which was to feedback from the previous event and to consult on the ALPs further. This was a joint event again held at Wyre Civic Centre in Poulton.

The third event took place within the statutory Public consultation period which started on 28th June. As part of the public consultation the CAP and ALP were mailed to an extended list of stakeholders across the whole of the Fylde Coast. This included operational staff at all the partners.

Each landlord was responsible for consulting with its tenants through a range of methods including newsletters, tenant events, tenant groups and directly through public access areas. The landlords also contacted a 10% sample from its waiting list inviting a response to the public consultation.

A website was setup with online documentation and an online questionnaire for people to complete. In addition to this, details of the consultation were posted on the websites of each local authority.

In order to access a wider public audience there was a press release to all the local newspapers. Posters and leaflets were placed in libraries, sports centres, community centres and other public areas including the Citizens Advice Bureau and local Parish councils. Information was displayed on VDU/TV at council and landlord reception areas along with large 'pop up' banners.

Finally all current applicants from the partners were sent a consultation booklet and questionnaire to complete and return. This resulted in a mail out to over 9000 applicants and a total of 1012 surveys returned.

Events

The three events held in September 2009, March 2010 and July 2010 were held for stakeholders. The invitees included council members, council employees and organisations and agencies who were identified as users of the housing services provided by the partners. A full list of invitees is included in Appendix two.

The following is a synopsis of those events highlighting the main issues raised. A full feedback of each event can be found in the Appendices.

Stakeholder Event 3rd/4th September, 2009

This event was designed to be an introduction of the sub-regional scheme. The content was planned to explain what a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme was, to update on where the Fylde Coast project was, to explain how the project was to proceed and to take on comments and answer any questions the audience might have.

There were three events, one taking place in each local authority area with a representative from the host local authority to present the local perspective. At the Fylde and Blackpool events results of a questionnaire sent to waiting list applicants was also presented, results can be found in appendix one. There was a presentation by Alison Venning from Communities and Local Government presenting an overview on sub-regional choice based lettings schemes. Simon Beynon, Housing Strategy Officer for Derbyshire Dales District Council, presented a 'How It Works' which was an insight in to the experience of introducing the scheme in Derbyshire.

On the whole the feedback was good. Below is a summary of the main issues raised and which were considered and fed back in to the process as the project proceeded.

- The scheme should be transparent. Applicants should understand how they are assessed, what properties they are eligible for and, when bidding, where they are on the list.
- The scheme should be accessible. Concerns about access through one or limited channels were raised. There was a need for assistance for those needing help when accessing the scheme.
- It is important for the scheme to improve the 'customer experience'; single policy, single application form, consistent approach from all partners.
- Questions were raised as to whether private landlords would be accepted on to the scheme.
- Consistent assessment of applicants was vital. Applicants would need to receive full range of housing options.
- This must be a fair scheme.
- Concerns were raised around political issues in particular applying local connection.
- It is vital that training be provided to those that need it.
- As the scheme would not provide more homes it was vital to manage expectations.

Full details of the event and feedback can be found in Appendix three.

CAP Consultation Event 18th March 2010

This event was designed to give an update on the scheme and also to consult with the stakeholders on the Consistent Assessment Policy and the Area Lettings Plans which were at an early draft stage.

The event took place at Lowther Pavilion in Lytham. There was representation from each Local Authority to present the local perspective. Frances Walker from Communities and Local Government gave a presentation on 'Fair and Flexible' and Dean Lomax, Project manager for the Scheme, gave a update on where the project was and what was needed moving forward. The rest of the event consisted of two workshops. The first workshop focussed on Area Lettings Plans with delegates splitting in to groups according to their local authority. The second workshop was on the Consistent Assessment Policy and these groups were made up of delegates from all three local authorities.

The workshop on the Area Lettings Plans focussed on four areas; 'Rotas and Quotas', rural lettings policies, estate specific policies and local connection. This is a summary of the main comments and issues raised:

'Rotas and Quotas'

- 'Rotas and Quotas must be linked to local strategic priorities
- Time on the list should be taken in to account and given priority
- Should contribute towards improving occupancy

Rural Policies

- On the whole everyone was happy with existing policies

Estate Specific Policies

- Should help to remove the 'stigma' associated with some estates. They should contribute towards improving perception.
- Used to promote homes to 'Key Workers'.
- Encourage training and employment by offering better quality homes to those that participate.

Local Connection

- Supported people need to be included when considering a connection.
- Questioned whether 'Local Connection' to a specific Local Authority Area would discourage mobility between areas.
- Qualifying periods were called in to question, in particular the '6 out of last 12 months'.
- There was general agreement with the connection criteria proposed.

The workshop on the Consistent Assessment Policy focused on four areas; banding, exclusions and suspensions, vulnerable groups and community engagement. This is a summary of the main comments and issues raised:

Banding

- The group thought the band names could be simplified to make it easier to understand.
- There is too much jargon and too many technical terms used, a glossary or similar would be useful.
- There is ambiguity in some of the terms used, these should be clarified
- The policy should be used to encourage the applicants to have some form of work.

Exclusions and Suspensions

- There needs to be more details about debt. What debt is included, should it include housing benefit and debt with private landlords.
- It was thought that there was some overlap between exclusions and suspensions. There needs to be more clarity in some of the criteria.
- There were questions around unacceptable behaviour. There needs to be a clearer description of what it is. Also, it should apply to the household and not just the applicant in both exclusions and suspensions.

Vulnerable Groups

- Should be a protocol for working with other agencies. Training needs to be given to those working with the service.
- Accessibility was a concern. Not everyone has the internet. There should be home visits available and also assisted bidding.

- It was a general consensus that more work was needed on the sections that applied to supported accommodation. There needs to be more clarity on what is considered supported accommodation.

Community Engagement

- Clear information was needed to engage with people; information about priorities, understanding how these apply, demand for properties and areas, where properties are available.
- Information should be taken to the communities; road shows, mobile units.
- Engage with agencies using their channels of information. Access hard to reach groups.
- Use existing channels especially tenant organisations, newsletters, etc.

Full details of the event and feedback can be found in Appendix four.

ALP Consultation Event 7th July 2010

The event was held at the Wyre Civic Centre with representation from Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. Dean Lomax, Project Manager, provided a brief overview of the project so far, Lucy Wright of Fylde Borough Council provided a summary of the feedback from the event held on 18th March 2010, including how the nine partners had responded to this. A copy of the response can be found in appendix five. Amber Sylvester of Wyre Borough Council provided an explanation of area lettings plans and what the workshops were going to cover.

There were three workshops – one for each local authority area. Each workshop covered three main areas; local connection, worklessness and the Area Lettings Plan for that local authority area. This is a summary of the main comments and issues raised:

Local Connection

- Concerns were raised about the qualifying periods. There was a consensus that they were too short. In particular, there was concern over the 6 out of 12 months. Also, with the 3 out of 5 years it was thought that this meant someone could have been away for two years which seemed wrong.
- It was thought the qualifying time of 5 years of residing in the area to either give or receive support to a close relative was too long.
- Concerns were raised about relatives needing support and moving to the area could have an impact on the cost of providing care in the local authority.
- Concerns were raised about the close relative criteria. There needed to be more clarity on what qualified as a close relative. Also it was thought that this could be abused.
- Where people had a connection because of needing to move for a job, there needed to be more clarity on what jobs qualified; permanent, temporary, voluntary?
- It was suggested that maybe applicants could be prioritised based on cumulative local connection criteria.

Worklessness

- There was a consensus that voluntary work should be included in the criteria and that the same definition should apply as for a paid job.
- Both temporary and permanent jobs should be considered.

Area Lettings Plan – with specific issues to each Local Authority

- There was a general consensus across all three groups that on the whole the area lettings plans were about right.

Specific issues from each area lettings plan is provided in appendix six, and full details of the event and feedback can be found in Appendix seven.

Statutory Public Consultation 28th June 2010 to 8th October 2010

The aim of the public consultation was to acquire comment from a wider public audience. To achieve this, the following groups were targeted:

- Council Members of participating Local Authorities
- Senior Management Team of Partner Organisations
- Operational Staff of Partner Organisations
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Third Sector Strategic Partnership (Blackpool)
- Current Tenants
- Current Applicants
- General Public

A consultation pack was produced including the Consistent Assessment Policy, a summary of the Consistent Assessment Policy, an introduction to Choice Based Lettings and the appropriate Area Lettings Plan. In order to gain appropriate feedback two questionnaires were produced, one for stakeholders and one for tenants, applicants and the general public. The latter was available for everyone to complete including stakeholders. See appendix eight for a copy of the stakeholder response form and general public questionnaire.

When considering what channels to use to promote the consultation the group took in to consideration previous consultation experience, best practice and KLOE 3.0 (Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry).

The consultation pack including the stakeholder questionnaire was sent to a comprehensive list including all those invited to the previous consultation event, a wider group of councillors and staff, an extensive list of agencies and organisations through the Local Strategic Partnership, the Third Party Strategic Partnership and the Advice Link Network. See appendix 9 for a full list of consultees.

The landlord partners were issued with a media pack containing all the information for the consultation pack and material which could be used for promoting the consultation on posters, newsletters, websites, etc. The existing tenants were consulted via newsletters, mailings, tenant groups, open days and conferences. Current applicants were consulted by sending a letter to a 10% sample from the waiting list. See appendix 10 for a summary of consultation activity.

To provide a public presence a 'MyHomeChoice' website was set-up with all the relevant information, downloadable consultation pack and an online questionnaire. In addition to this the consultation was promoted on the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Council websites. The consultation was promoted in the partners public areas using posters, pop-up banners and 'Plasma' presentations. In addition to the partner public spaces, posters and leaflets were distributed to a wide network of public spaces including parish councils, libraries, community centres, sports centres, swimming baths, Citizens Advice Bureau and other sundry locations. See appendix eleven for a full list of locations. There was a press release which was circulated to Blackpool Gazette, Lancashire Evening Post, Lytham St. Annes Express, Garstang Courier and Fleetwood Weekly News. For a copy of the press release see appendix twelve.

The consultation originally ran from the 28th June 2010 to 19th September 2010. This was extended until 8th October with stakeholders contacted again to encourage more responses.

There was a total of 9 responses from the stakeholders and 61 responses to the public questionnaire.

The process of feeding the responses from the consultation in to the process has been completed with comments pertaining to the Consistent Assessment Policy and Area Lettings Plans being acted on where appropriate. The other information will be used going forward in defining how the scheme is implemented and run.

Below is a summary of the main comments and results from the statutory public consultation:

Stakeholders:

- General agreement with the scheme objectives
- The suspension criteria and banding criteria are easy to understand however it was noted that the policy did contain a lot of jargon which required definitions.
- There was agreement that the area lettings plans were clear and easy to understand
- Comments were made on some inaccuracies in the policy which have been resolved.

General Public

- 88% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the draft Consistent Assessment Policy is easy to understand
- 86% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the banding criteria is easy to understand.
- 88.5% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the proposed banding system.
- 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the creation of band E.
- 86% of respondents agreed that the new system will give priority to people who are most in need of housing.
- 87% of respondents answered that no parts of the policy were not clear.
- 65% of respondents agree or strongly agree that people from neighbouring boroughs can apply for accommodation in their area.
- Telephone, the internet and in person were the preferred methods of making a bid.
- 96% of respondents agree with the priorities in the area lettings plans

Appendix thirteen provides a list of the comments received via the stakeholder response forms and appendix fourteen provides the results of the general public questionnaire.

Further Consultation

Due to the small number of questionnaire returns between July and October it was felt that a second consultation exercise should be completed. It was decided to create a consultation booklet which explained who was involved in the project, why the change, and a summary of the banding criteria and area lettings plans for each local authority area. The booklet also included a tear off questionnaire to complete and return to Blackpool Council. A copy of the booklet can be found in appendix fifteen.

In total 9,178 booklets with the detachable questionnaire were sent out using the data supplied by Blackpool Coastal Housing, New Fylde Housing and Regenda comprising:

5,364 households – Blackpool Coastal Housing

2,105 households – New Fylde Housing

1,709 households – Regenda

2,071 (23%) of these households were from outside of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre boroughs and attracted a slightly higher response rate; findings are broken down by borough and identify any variation in opinion for each area.

A total of 119 envelopes were returned as not at this address of which 64 were from the housing registers of Blackpool Coastal Housing, 39 New Fylde Housing and 16 Regenda.

Of the respondents who replied 63 required follow ups, 35 Blackpool Housing Allocations; 15 New Fylde Housing; and 13 Regenda applicants.

Duplication totalled 342, 5 households were on all 3 registers, the remaining 166 households were on 2 registers (14 were outside of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre boroughs).

Housing register data was not supplied by Great Places, Places for People, or Muir Housing Group as these partners were unable to meet the deadline required for the consultation.

The information was posted on 29th November 2010 with a return date of 20th December 2010; details of the scheme and an invitation to participate were also made available on the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast website at <http://fyldecoastcbl.co.uk>. With an overall 11.03% response rate, findings are based on 1,012 replies. An additional 10 replies were received after the consultation had closed and are not included in the analysis. Not all respondents answered every question.

Based on the postcode analysis of households surveyed who answered the question “Where do you live now?” response rates are estimated as follows:

Question 1 asked “Do you agree with the proposed banding system of the Consistent Assessment Policy?” Overall 88% of respondents who answered this question “agreed”, of whom 23% “strongly agreed”.

Question 2 asked “Do you agree that people with a connection to the Fylde Coast area should have a priority over people from out of the area?” Overall 87% of respondents who answered this question “agreed”, of whom 54% “strongly agreed”.

Question 3 asked “To make sure we take account of applicants who are working and in need of affordable housing we have created Band E. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?” Overall 87% of respondents who answered this question “agreed”, of whom 23% “strongly agreed”.

Question 4 asked “Properties that have been adapted will only be made available to applicants who have a disability. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?” Overall 95% of respondents who answered this question “agreed”, of whom 56% “strongly agreed”.

Question 5 asked “Where do you live now?” and the response rate across the areas is summarised below.

Where do you live now?	Households surveyed	Response rate	Response Count
Blackpool	3,768	9.87%	372
Fylde	1,972	12.58%	248
Wyre	1,367	8.78%	120
Other (households outside of the 3 boroughs)	2,071	12.51%	259
	9,178	10.88%	999

Question 6 asked “Do you agree with the lettings plan for each area? All three boroughs showed that 90% of respondents who answered this question “agreed”, of whom 22% “strongly agreed”. Respondents who currently live outside of the three boroughs showed a variance in their answer, as 12% gave no view, assuming they believed the question related to where they lived rather than where they had applied or aspired to live.

A full copy of the consultation booklet questionnaire results can be found in Appendix sixteen.

All the appendices referred to in this document can be accessed on the scheme’s website at: www.fyldecoastcbl.co.uk

Appendix 2



Fylde Borough Council Area Lettings Plan



Version Control

Date	Version	Details	Responsible Officer
18/01/2011	Draft	Final amendments	L Wright
19/01/2011	Final Draft	Final amendments prior to approval issue	J Parker

Fylde Area Lettings Plan

Each local authority has a statutory responsibility to make best use of its scarce housing resources and ensure that, as far as possible, priority for re-housing is based on a combination of re-housing needs and waiting time. It does this by setting out how social housing will be allocated to people in need within its area in an Allocation Scheme. The Allocation Scheme for Fylde comprises two elements – a Consistent Assessment Policy and a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan.

The role of the Consistent Assessment Policy is to set out how applicants for social housing are assessed when they register their requirements for a home, and to provide consistent procedures for the operation of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Choice system across the three local authority areas.

This Area Lettings Plan maps out the supply and demand issues impacting on social housing specifically in the borough of Fylde. Using this information, the Area Lettings Plan sets out priorities and vision of how social housing is let in the borough over the next 12 months. The RSL partners will work to achieve the priorities in the plan when letting their stock. The appropriate mechanisms will be set up within the choice based lettings IT system to ensure the plan can be monitored and reviewed each year. The plan is a strategic tool that enables lettings by housing providers to be linked to wider strategic issues and ensures best use is made of their stock available. This ensures that Fylde Borough Council is carrying out its duty as a non stock holding strategic housing authority and is making best use of the scarce social housing stock.

While the needs of applicants will be assessed in a consistent way across the Fylde Coast, each local authority has its own Area Lettings Plan to reflect different demand and supply issues and local priorities. Fylde BC will consult with partner housing associations on the detail of the lettings plan when it is developed each year. As lettings are made by housing associations because they own and manage the social housing stock, the local authority is reliant on them for delivery of the priorities set out in the Area Lettings Plan. The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast system provides comprehensive data on lettings that is monitored to understand the extent to which the priorities of the Area Lettings Plan are being implemented, and to review the Plan on an area basis.

Currently the information base on Social lettings in the Borough is underdeveloped and the development of the plan requires an estimate of the properties available over the next twelve months and an estimate of the demand for properties based on past trends. Ideally this will enable demand from the priority categories to be established and a target percentage of lettings to be established. Actual lettings outcomes can then be measured against the plan to monitor the effectiveness of the allocations scheme to meet the identified needs.

It is proposed for Fylde that the lettings plan should operate annually from April each year. The first Area lettings plan will operate from September 2011

to March 2012 to align with the commencement of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme and enable the collation of the required background data.

Strategic Priorities

The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 sets out the overall challenges and priorities for providing Fylde Coast residents with a great place to live – both in terms of individual homes that meet households' needs at a price that they can afford, and in providing attractive residential neighbourhood environments where people can lead fulfilling and productive lives. There are three objectives that particularly need to be taken into account in framing Area Lettings Plans:

- provide more of the affordable homes that are in the highest demand
- reduce concentrations of deprivation on large social housing estates by improving the neighbourhood environments, re-developing unpopular housing stock, and diversifying tenures
- provide new opportunities for people at risk of homelessness, and those without work, to make a positive contribution to the local community

Social rented housing plays a small but important role within the whole housing market. Along with private rented housing subsidised through Housing Benefit, it provides homes that are affordable to people on low incomes, and is therefore critical in meeting a fundamental need for a significant proportion of the local population. Social rented homes particularly offer strong security of tenure, low rents that people can afford without further assistance if they are in low paid work, accommodation fitted out to Decent Homes standards, and reliable standards of management and repair. The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy sets out the need for the provision of additional social rented properties because the existing stock of socially rented homes cannot meet the high demand.

Despite efforts to provide more new homes, a shortage of social rented homes, and especially houses suitable for larger families and homes in rural areas, will continue for the foreseeable future. This means that difficult decisions have to be made to prioritise who gets access to a limited resource. It also means that we need to be using existing social rented homes to their full potential, and it may be appropriate to use the allocations scheme to help people who want to move out of social rented homes that are larger than they need ("under-occupying") to smaller homes.

In areas where there is a lot of social rented housing, there are some significant concentrations of deprivation. In some cases exacerbated by unpopular house types or a poor quality environment, this leads to a culture of low expectations, poor educational achievement, and social marginalisation. The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy sets out particular areas where improvements are required to the physical infrastructure, and where we need

to be encouraging more balance in the make up of the local community – for example, balanced between people who are in work and those dependent on benefits, balanced between single people and families, and balanced between people who are physically able and people who require long term care. One way of achieving this is to review how homes are allocated in these areas, although there is inevitably a tension that has to be managed between the requirement to allocate housing to individuals with the highest needs, and the requirement to foster more balanced communities.

Given the high levels of worklessness found among social housing tenants, it is also important that social landlords and public agencies assist tenants in finding training and employment. This is another area where the design of priorities for allocations can help, by giving incentives to people to be active in getting into work, and assisting movement so that people can live near new employment.

Lastly, social housing provides an important resource for helping vulnerable people move on from specialist supported accommodation, and for providing emergency accommodation for people with an immediate need for shelter. It is important that it continues to play this role, but this needs to be balanced in making allocations with the needs of other people with lower or less acute needs.

What are the current issues and actions in Fylde?

Fylde's more detailed issues and priorities for action from the Fylde Action Plan include:

- The shortage of available social rented accommodation compared with demand is especially high in Fylde. We need to carefully manage expectations and offer alternative options.
- Making better use of social rented accommodation that is under-occupied
- Younger people are not being attracted to Fylde, nor persuaded to stay; the high cost of housing is driving them out of the area.
- Sustainability of rural communities / services
- Large and growing population of older people - making effective use of properties suitable for people with mobility problems / close to support services
- Establish a plan for changing the balance of specialist support for older people – may become appropriate to widen access to properties currently designated as sheltered if support is increasingly provided wherever people live rather than focused on designated accommodation.

- Agree and deliver plans for meeting the housing needs of people requiring long term care, including people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities -
- We need to provide opportunities for people in specialist supported accommodation to move on to general needs properties when they no longer need specialist support.

Lettings Plan 2011/12

The lettings plan for 2011/12 proposes a number of components as set out below.

1. Local Connection

In Fylde, priority will be given to applicants who have a local connection to the borough of Fylde, either through current residence or work. This will be achieved through the following mechanism.

Anyone can register on the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme (provided they are not ineligible). However when it comes to positioning on the list we propose three levels of connection priority:

1. Connection to the LA
2. Connection to the Fylde Coast
3. No connection to either of the above

When awarding priority, applicants have a local connection if they can demonstrate one of the following:-

- Local residency – they have lived in the area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 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

This means that - for example - in Fylde properties will be offered to those with a Fylde connection first and then will only be made available to people from the other two authorities if no one with a qualifying Fylde connection, as outlined above has bid for the property. The property will then only be made available to people outside Fylde Coast area if no one from the three local authority areas has bid.

This means that generally properties will be allocated as follows:

- Band A – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band B – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
- Band C – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)

Band D – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
 Band E – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
 Band F – Local connection (e.g. Fylde)
 Band A – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band B – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band C – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band D – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band E – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band F – Partner connection (e.g. Blackpool and Wyre)
 Band F – No local connection (e.g. Devon)

The Consistent Assessment Policy establishes a number of principles that help address the issues set out on page 4:

- Generally, a property will be let to the person expressing an interest who has the highest priority band, and where there is more than one person from this band bidding for the property, it will be let to the person in that band who has been waiting longest.
- People who are under-occupying a social rented home or live in a home with disabled adaptations and who are applying to move through the CBL system will be given a high priority band.
- People who are in temporary accommodation or who are applying to move on from specialist supported accommodation will also be given a high priority band.

2. Priorities and Housing need

The Fylde area lettings plan will have a key role in ensuring that social housing allocations in the borough meet the requirements of those in the most serious need requiring the majority of lettings to those in the higher bands.

The area lettings plan will monitor the effectiveness of this approach by including an indicator in the Fylde area monitoring report relating to allocations/banding and the reasonable preference groups (appendix 1)

Within this overall requirement there are a number of issues specific to Fylde which the Area lettings plan will seek to address as outlined below:

• Low demand for Sheltered Housing

Within Fylde Borough sheltered accommodation makes up approximately 30% of the LSVT stock and over the last twelve months demand has reduced greatly. For the first time some New Fylde Housing sheltered schemes have had long term voids.

New Fylde Housing currently operate open access and no connection to the Borough and are working on other initiatives to assist in reducing the number of long term voids in sheltered housing.

- Sheltered housing in Fylde will be open to all applicants with a connection to the Fylde Coast excluding those properties in the ownership of New Fylde Housing where an open policy applies. The area lettings plan will monitor the effectiveness of this approach by including an indicator in the Fylde Annual monitoring report (Appendix 1)

- **Access to Social housing for young people (under the age of 25)**

A current issue for Fylde as identified within the Fylde Coast Housing strategy is that younger people are not being attracted to Fylde, nor persuaded to stay; the high cost of housing is driving them out of the area. Within the private rented sector young people under the age of 25 years are often priced out of the market due to the Housing Benefit single room rent restriction. Statistics collected by Face to Face YMCA show that in 08/09 1279 enquiries were received from customers aged under 25 years about the rent bond guarantee scheme.

Through consultation it was decided not to set any targets regarding the number of lettings to people under the age of 25 years due a lack of detailed information and that this should be monitored.

- The area lettings plan will monitor the number of lets to those aged below 25 years during 2011/12 via the Fylde Annual monitoring report (Appendix 1). A decision will be made if targets need to be set in future years with an aim of improving access to social housing for this age group.

- **Deprivation on large social housing estates**

The reduction of deprivation will be achieved by working in partnership with the RSL partners and through the development of estate specific lettings plans.

Initially for 2011/12 this will focus on those estates identified for action in the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy and Fylde housing action plan

Through consultation it was agreed that a number of lets on the largest estates should be to people who are working but no targets were set.

- The area lettings plan will monitor the number of lets, number of bids and household makeup of successful bidders on the Kilnhouse and Lower Lane Estates. The results will determine what action needs to be taken in future years.

- **Accommodation for single people at or below retirement age**

As at December 2008 35% of current general needs tenants were single and below retirement age. 1315 people aged 25+ in 08/09 enquired about the rent bond guarantee scheme operated by Face to Face YMCA, and the majority of these enquiries will have been from single people.

During 08/09 76 single households without children and in 09/10 52 single households without children presented as homeless to the Local authority.

There is a shortage of affordable accommodation for single people at or below retirement age. During 09/10 there were 11 adverts for existing single person accommodation through New Fylde Housing CBL scheme.

- The area lettings plan will seek to address this situation by monitoring the number of lets and bids placed for each relevant void via the Fylde Annual monitoring report (Appendix 1). A decision will be made if targets need to be set in future years with an aim of improving access to social housing for this group.

- **Improve access to social housing for those households not in immediate housing need but in need of affordable housing.**

These are likely to be households who are economically active and living in the private rented sector. It is likely that such households are reliant on housing benefit and struggling to pay a top up towards the rent.

- The area lettings plan will monitor the number of lets and successful households via the Fylde Annual monitoring report (Appendix 1) to establish if in future years a certain number of lets will be allocated to households in less housing need but who still require a more affordable option.

3. Scheme / Area specific lettings restrictions

In some parts of the borough, or for some specialist housing stock, there is a need to have further restrictions on who can live there. These restrictions will be made clear to people on the waiting list when these properties are advertised.

Broadly, there are two types of restrictions:

a). Where priority is given to applicants from particular localities, rather than to people from the whole of the borough (or wider Fylde Coast). This is especially the case in rural areas where affordable housing has been built on

the understanding that priority will be given to people from the immediate local area. In some cases, these restrictions are legally enforceable through Section 106 Agreements signed when the homes were given planning approval. The areas of Fylde that have such restrictions are:

A total of 212 New Fylde Housing properties located in Little Eccleston, Elswick, Greenhalgh, Singleton, Weeton, Clifton, Newton, Staining, Wrea Green, Salwick and Singleton all have a rural lettings policy in place. These properties require a local connection to the parish which includes current residence in the parish, etc

b). Where eligibility for certain types of housing is restricted by age, type of household, or health conditions. The social housing in Fylde that has these types of restriction is:

Saltcotes Place	Local Lettings Plan	NFH
Sandringham Court	Age Restriction	NFH
Ansdell	Age Restriction	NFH
Heyhouses flats	Age Restriction	NFH
Willowfieds Wesham	S106 local connection to Kirkham or Wesham required	NFH
St Johns Court	Extra care units	NFH
Stana Lodge	Extra care units	NFH
Crossing Gates Wesham	S106 local connection to Kirkham or Wesham required	Muir
Clifton Drive North St Annes	S106 first preference to people with a connection to Lytham or ST Annes	Great Places Housing Group

Within the current stock there are a number of ground floor properties and adapted properties. Priority for these properties will be given to people with a specific ground floor need and or a need for an adapted property.

The area lettings plan will include a specific element to initially monitor the use of and impact of these restrictions through the Fylde Area monitoring report (Appendix 1)

4. Annual Monitoring report

The annual monitoring report will incorporate all the issues identified in the Area lettings plan and reported on the basis as outlined in Appendix 1

Lettings performance will be reported annually to the appropriate council committee each autumn, enabling any changes to policy to be made for the following financial year (April).

Appendix 1 Annual Monitoring report

Section 1 Demand and Supply data

Table 1.1

Supply profile information

- Supply profile – includes new build units, RSL voids

Table 1.2

Sub regional CBL housing register data

- Detail from the housing register – how many people in each band
- Property requirements for those on housing register

Section 2 Allocations data

Table 2.1

Allocations across bands/reasonable preference groups

- Bidding activity
- Number of lets completed and which band allocated to
- Number of lets completed and what property type allocated
- Reasons for re-housing
- Average waiting time by property type, band and number of lets

Table 2.2

Allocations according to each of the local priorities:

- Low demand for Sheltered Housing
- Access to Social housing for young people (under the age of 25)
- Deprivation on large social housing estates
- Accommodation for single people at or below retirement age
- Access to social housing for those households not in immediate housing need but in need of affordable housing.
- Scheme / Area specific lettings restrictions

Appendix 2 Local Housing Allowance rates and Private Sector Housing Rents

TABLE 2.1 LHA Rate May 2010 Fylde

	Weekly	Monthly
Under 25 shared rate	£66	£286
1 bed	£92.05	£398.88
2 bed	£123.12	£533.52
3 bed	£138.08	£598.34
4 bed	£180.00	£780.00
5 bed	£218.25	£945.75
6 bed	£218.25	£945.75

Source www.fylde.gov.uk

TABLE 2.2 Private Sector Rents

Minimum monthly rents Fylde 2002 and 2007			
	2002	2007	% change
1 bed	£276	£394	42.8%
2 bed	£374	£500	33.7%
3 bed	£500	£581	16.3%
4 bed	£663	£888	33.9%

Source Affordable Housing Update Fordham Research Survey of Estate agents 2002 & 2007

TABLE 2.3 Average Rents in St Annes within a 5 mile radius June 2010

	Average Rent June 2010
1 bed flat	£373
2 bed flat	£512
2 bed house	£519
3 bed house	£609
4 bed house	£820

Source Look4aproperty.com

Appendix 3 - Background Information obtained from CORE data

NEW FYLDE HOUSING CORE 2008/09

A total of 144 general needs lets have been recorded on the CORE¹ system.

Average age of new general needs tenants =48

The table below shows the age of the head of the household for each new let completed in 2008/09 by New Fylde Housing.

TABLE 3.1

Age	Number of lets	%
16-17	1	0.5
18-24	19	13
25-31	21	14.5
32-38	12	8
39-45	11	8
46-52	14	10
53-59	19	13
60-64	8	5.5
65-69	16	11
70-74	9	6
75-79	8	5.5
80+	6	4
	144	99%

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

TABLE 3.2

Household type General needs		
Older people	52	36%
Single adult	26	18%
Couple no children	14	10%
Single parent	27	19%
Couple and children	25	17%

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

TABLE 3.3

Type of accommodation in which household lived immediately prior to rehousing		
LA General needs tenancy	8	6%
HA general needs tenancy	70	49%
Owner occupier	3	2%
Private sector tenancy	14	10%
Tied housing rented to job	1	0.5%
Supported housing	1	0.5%
Living with family	19	13%
Foyer	1	0.5%
Mobile home	9	6%
Any other temporary accommodation	3	2%
Other	15	10%
	144	99.5%

¹ CORE – Continuous Recording is a national information source funded jointly by the TSA (Tenant Services Authority) and CLG that records information on the characteristics of housing association new social housing tenants.

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

TABLE 3.4

Economic status – head of household General needs		
Working full time	28	19%
Working part time	9	6
Government training	1	1
Job seeker	8	5.5
Retired	45	31
Not seeking work	16	11
Student	0	0
Long term sick/disabled	23	16
Other	14	10
TOTAL	144	99.5%

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

TABLE 3.5

Income General needs		
All state benefits/state pensions	63	44%
Partly from state benefits	36	25%
No state benefits	22	15%
Don't know	23	16%
	144	100%

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

TABLE 3.6

Qualify for Housing Benefit General needs		
Yes	85	60%
No	38	26%
Don't know	21	14%
	144	100%

Source CORE data New Fylde Housing 08/09

Appendix 4 Stock Profile

TABLE 4.1 General needs and sheltered stock located in Fylde for the sub regional partners

	Places for People	Regenda	Muir	Great Places Housing Group	New Fylde Housing	TOTAL
Ballam					3 3x3bed	3
Clifton					51 22x2bed 20x3bed 2x4bed 7x1bed	51
Elswick					19 2x2bed 6x3bed 11x1bed bung	19
Freckleton	35 23x3beds 12x2beds			2 1x3bed 1x2bed	152 63x2bed 79x3bed 10x1bed bung 49 8 bedsits (S) 40x1bed (S) 1x2bed (S)	238
Greenhalgh					3 2x3bed 1x4bed	3
Kirkham	21 13x2beds 8x1beds (S)	13		11 9x1bed 1x2bed 1x3bed	157 25x2bed 58x3bed 10x4bed 8x1bed f 23x2bed f 22x1bed bung 11x2bed bung 71 69x1bed (S) 2x2bed (S)	273
Little Eccleston					6 1x2bed 1x3bed 4x1bed bung	6
Newton					25 14x2bed 10x3bed 1x4bed	25
Peel					1 1x3bed	1
Salwick					8 7x3bed 1x4bed	8
Singleton					3 2x2bed 1x3bed	3
Staining					60 26x2bed	60

	Places for People	Regenda	Muir	Great Places Housing Group	New Fylde Housing	TOTAL
					16x3bed 4x4bed 4x1bed 2x2bed 8x1bed bung	
Warton	40 1x7bed 31x2beds 8x3beds 4x2beds (S)	1		11 4x3bed 7x2bed	122 55x2bed 29x3bed 13x4bed 25x1bed bung	174
Weeton					27 6x3bed 16x2bed 1x4bed 4x1bed	27
Wesham	20 15x2beds 5x3beds	3	24 12x3bed 8x2bed 4x1bed	1 1x2bed	90 16x2bed 34x3bed 3x4bed 7x1bed F 21x2bed F 9x1bed bung 35 22x1bed (S) 13x1bed b (S)	173
Wharles					1 1x3bed	1
Wrea Green					10 6x3bed 4x1bed bung	10
Ansdell					153 23x3bed 4x1bed 104x2bed f 20x3bed f 148 58 bedsit (S) 76x1bed (S) 14x1bed b (S)	301
St Annes	38 13x3beds 9x2beds 2x1bed 14x1bed (S)	5		35 26x2bed 9x1bed	359 10x2bed 133x3bed 2x4bed 77x1bed f 132x2bed f 1x3bed f 5x1bed bung 54 30x1bed (S) 4x2bed (S) 20 1bed b (S)	491
Lytham	7 4x2bed 1x2bed (S) 2x3bed			9 4x2bed 3x3bed 2x4bed	36 1x2bed 31x3bed 4x1bed f	126

	Places for People	Regenda	Muir	Great Places Housing Group	New Fylde Housing	TOTAL
					74 74x1bed (S)	
TOTAL	161	22	24	69	1717	1993

*(S) = Sheltered Source: RSL Partners

TABLE 4.3 General needs stock

1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	TOTAL
237	678	560	40	1516
			+1x7 bed	

To note a number of 1 bed flats may have mobile warden support attached to the property but have not been categorised as sheltered by the relevant RSL.

TABLE 4.4 Sheltered stock

1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	TOTAL
446	12	*	*	458

To note bedsits are included in the 1bed flat total.

To note within the calculation above for Tables 2.3 & 2.4, 19 units are not included.

Appendix 5 Waiting List Numbers

TABLE 5.1 Waiting List figures as at date shown below

Great Places (as at 19/01/2010)	Places for People (as at March 2010)	New Fylde Housing (as at March 2010)	TOTAL
330	360	2336	3026

Source RSL Partners

Appendix 6 Stock Turnover

TABLE 6.1 Lettings completed in Fylde during 2008-09

Places for People	Regenda	Muir	Great Places Housing Group	New Fylde Housing	TOTAL (All providers)
14	4	10	7	139 General 71 sheltered	245

Source RSL Partners

TABLE 6.2 Comparison of size requirements of households in need with profile of re-lets - Fylde

Size	Households in need	Profile of re-lets
Bedsit / 1 bed	56%	19%
2 bed	19%	58%
3 bed	15%	23%
3 bed plus	10%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Source Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Section B priorities December 2008

TABLE 6.3 New Fylde Housing CBL adverts for 09/10

Property type	Existing stock adverts	New build adverts
1 bed flat	11	2 (Clifton Drive Development)
2 bed bungalow	0	4 (Disability bungalows Heyhouses)
2 bed flat	38	91 (8 Rock Works; 8 Clifton Dr; 75 Heyhouses 55+)
2 bed house	26	6 (Willowfields)
3 bed house	29	45 (11 Lower Lane; 8 Weeton; 26 Heyhouses)
3 bed flat	3	0
4 bed house	1	10 (4 Lower Lane; 6 Heyhouses)
Sheltered	266*	

Source FBC CBL advert monitoring sheet

*To note many properties have been advertised on numerous occasions.

TABLE 6.4 New Fylde Housing CBL adverts 09/10 by area General needs only

Property type	Lower Lane	Kilnhouse Estate	Saltcotes	Rural	All other stock	TOTAL
1 bed flat		5			6	11
2 bed bungalow						
2 bed flat		18	4		16	38
2 bed house	11			5	10	26
3 bed house	11	3		4	11	29
3 bed flat			2		1	3
4 bed house					1	1
	22	26	6	9	45	108
	20%	24%	6%	8%	42%	

Appendix 7 Planned Provision 09/10 and 10/11

TABLE 7.1

RSL	Scheme	Social Rented Units	Shared ownership units	Completion
NFH	Walter Ave St Annes	3		June 2009
NFH	Lower Lane Freckleton	15		September 09
GPHG	Clifton Drive North	10		December 09
NFH	Heyhouses	10		March 2010
NFH	Mythop Road Weeton	8		June 2010
NFH	Nateby Close	1		2010
NFH	Heyhouses	101		2010
NFH	The Close Kirkham	2		April 2011
NFH	Keyline Site	20	6	April 2011

Source Housing FBC and RSL Partnership

Appendix 3

Consistent Assessment Policy for the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast Scheme Prepared by the Fylde Coast Allocations Working Group Following Stakeholder Consultation



Working in Partnership with



Version Control

Date	Version	Details	Responsible Officer
06/12/2010	Draft	Draft versions up to legal counsel	L Wright
15/12/2010	Draft	Changes following legal response for Consultation with partners	H Master
16/12/2010	Draft	Incorporation of consultation changes	H Master
06/01/2011	Draft	Final changes and checking prior to board	J Parker
10/01/2011	Draft	Cosmetic changes following board	J Parker
17/01/2011	Draft	Hyperlinks inserted	L Wright
19/01/2011	Final Draft	Final amendments prior to approval issue	J Parker

Requesting a copy of the policy

This policy is available from any of the nine partners in large print.

If you require a copy of this policy in Braille or translated in another language please contact any of the nine partners at the contact points below. Alternatively you can log on to www.fyldecoastcbl.co.uk for more details.

Contact details

	In person	In writing	By telephone	By E mail
Blackpool Council	Housing Team South King St Blackpool FY1 4TR	Children Adults & Family Services – Housing, South King Street, Blackpool, FY1 4TR	01253 477980	Housing.allocations@blackpool.gov.uk
Wyre Borough Council	Civic Centre Breck Road, Poulton le Fylde FY6 7PU	Housing Civic Centre Breck Road, Poulton le Fylde FY6 7PU	01253 891000	mailroom@wyrebc.gov.uk
Fylde Borough Council	Fylde BC Public Offices 292 Clifton Dr South St Annes FY8 1LH	Housing Team Fylde BC Town Hall St Annes FY8 1LW	01253 658658	housing@fylde.gov.uk
Blackpool Coastal Housing	Homestop Coastal House 17-19 Abingdon Street Blackpool FY1 1DG	Homestop Coastal House 17-19 Abingdon Street Blackpool FY1 1DG	01253 477047	homestop@bch.co.uk
Great Places Housing Group	336 Talbot Road Blackpool FY1 3QU	336 Talbot Road , Blackpool FY1 3QU	0845 850 1966	cat@greatplaces.org.uk
Muir Group Housing Ltd	67 Chepstow Road Blackpool FY3 7PH	Muir Group Housing Association PO Box 136 Frodsham, WA6 1AW	0300 123 1222	info@muir.org.uk
New Fylde Housing	Warwick House, Kilnhouse Lane, St Annes FY8 3DU	Warwick House, Kilnhouse Lane St Annes FY8 3DU	01253 642000	
Places for People	18 Craven Drive, South Rings Business Park, Bamber Bridge, PR5 6BZ	18 Craven Drive South Rings Business Park, Bamber Bridge PR5 6BZ	0800 432 0002	
Regenda (Wyre Housing Association)	1-7 Lord Street, Fleetwood FY7 6DX	1-7 Lord Street, Fleetwood FY7 6DX	0344 736 0066	info@regendafirst.org.uk

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1 Introduction

'MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast' is the Choice Based Lettings Scheme which operates across the Fylde Coast region. This scheme has been developed by the three Fylde Coast Local Authorities working in partnership with the Social Housing Providers as listed below. In the drafting of the scheme, the legal provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002 relating to Choice Based Lettings and the Codes of Guidance issued by the Government have been taken fully into consideration. This scheme has been adopted by the relevant elected members of each of the three Fylde Coast local authorities.

Blackpool Council
Fylde Borough Council
Wyre Borough Council

Blackpool Coastal Housing
Great Places Housing Group
Muir Group Housing Ltd

New Fylde Housing
Places for People
Regenda (Wyre Housing Association)

To gain access to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme, applicants only have to register once. They are then able to bid for the vacancies advertised.

Although MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast provides greater choice for applicants, the scheme in itself does not increase the number of properties available. Vacancies are advertised and applicants are encouraged to take an active part in the process by expressing their interest. 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
- To widen the choice of housing
- To ensure the scheme is open, fair and accountable.
- To increase understanding and satisfaction of the letting system
- To give new tenants a feeling of ownership of their property and community
- To help create sustainable communities
- To make more efficient use of the available housing stock
- To help tackle low demand and reduce void turnaround times
- To 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)

1.1 Statement of Choice

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast recognises the Government's desire for applicants to have an element of choice in terms of housing.

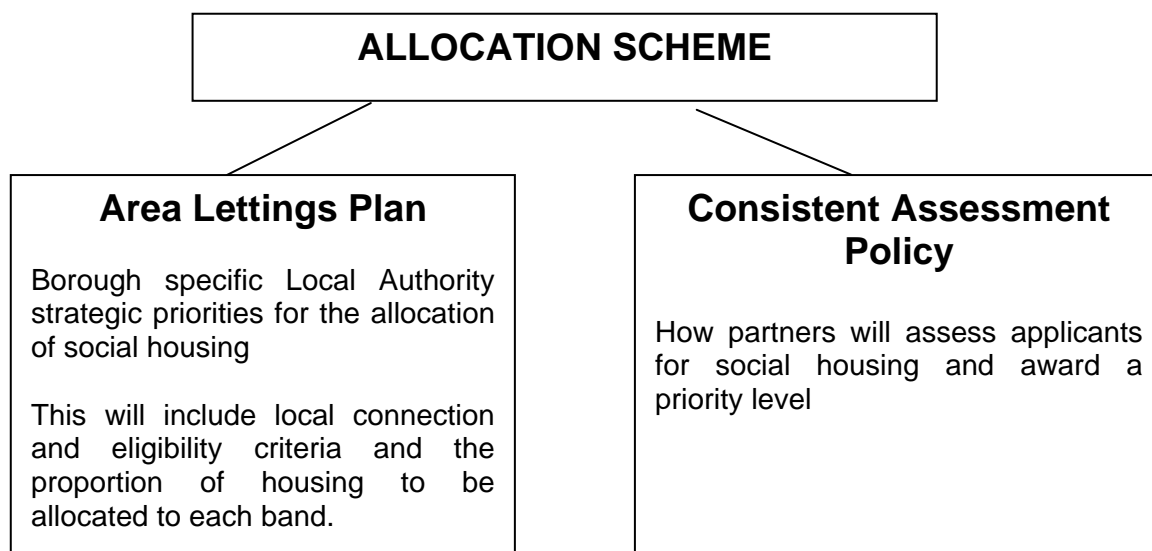
The scheme is open to all applicants. This means that applicants can exercise choice through bidding for properties that they want to live in across the Fylde Coast.

1.2 The Choice Based Lettings Scheme in Brief

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast provides a unified way for local authorities to provide greater choice in the allocation of social housing through the advertising of social housing properties. All social landlords who are participating partners in the scheme are committed to advertising their empty properties to those who have applied to be in the scheme. 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. The successful applicant will be selected from those who have applied for the property. Selection is based on the applicant's priority band and the length of time the applicant has been in that band plus any specific local connection criteria.

1.3 Consistent Assessment Policy

This policy deals with how applicants to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Lettings Scheme will be assessed and priority awarded. The policy forms one element of the Allocation Scheme of each Fylde Coast local authority.



Each local authority has a statutory duty to have an Allocation 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, the profile of the stock and the vacancies which are likely to come available, and also reflects any agreed strategic priorities.

Within Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde, the local authorities' Allocation Schemes each comprise a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan together with this Consistent Assessment Policy. This means that each individual authority is able to determine its strategic priorities and determine the proportion of stock that will go to each priority banding. The particular role of this Consistent Assessment Policy is to set out how applicants for social housing are assessed and then banded within the scheme and to provide consistent procedures for the operation of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast system. This Policy will be refined and periodically reviewed to take into account the priorities established within

the local authorities' lettings plans, and in response to feedback on how well the system is operating.

1.4 Governance

The requirement to have an allocation scheme applies to all local authorities regardless of whether or not they retain ownership of the housing stock and whether or not they contract out the delivery of any of their allocation functions. Authorities are prohibited from contracting out certain allocation functions, including adopting and altering the allocation scheme, which includes principles on which the scheme is framed. 'Procedure' includes all aspects of the allocation process, including the people, or descriptions of people, by whom decisions are taken. It is essential therefore that the scheme reflects all the local authorities policies and procedures, including information on whether the decisions are taken by elevated members or officers acting under delegated powers.

The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast system is subject to a sub-regional partnership agreement, which ensures that the scheme is kept up to date and meets regional, and national best practice guidelines.

The Allocation Scheme will be managed by a sub-regional Steering Group made up of the Housing 'Managers' from all Partner Organisations and other relevant stakeholders. The group will meet at least 4 times a year to ensure continuous update and development of the partnership agreement.

All Partner Organisations and relevant stakeholders will contribute to monitoring, developing, funding and making policy decisions about the allocation scheme.

A full copy of the policy or a summary of this allocation scheme can be obtained from any of the partner's websites or in hard copy from any of the partner's offices as listed at the beginning of this document.

1.5 Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the Partner Organisations to which the application was originally submitted - with the exception of Fylde and Wyre Borough Councils. These Councils will direct applicants to their partner LSVT Housing Associations. In these cases the partner LSVT Housing Association is the assessing Partner Organisation. The decisions in respect of allocation of housing will be made by officers of the respective partner organisations. On line applications will be assessed by the designated Partner Organisation.

1.6 Applying to join the scheme

1.6.1 Eligibility

Anyone aged 16 or over¹ is eligible to apply to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Housing Register unless they are in one of the excluded groups mentioned below.

¹ 16 & 17 year olds can apply to go on the register, but may not be made an offer of a tenancy see page 29.

1.6.2 Exclusions

There are, broadly two groups of people who are not able to apply to join the scheme: persons from abroad, and those guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour. Where there are two or more persons jointly making an application to join the scheme, if any one of them is a person failing within the two exceptions discussed above, then none of them is eligible to join the scheme.

In the first group are:

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

More details can be found in [Appendix One](#) at the end of this document.

These exclusions do not apply to anyone who is already a tenant of a local authority or a Social Housing Provider, who has been allocated to his home by a local authority.

In the second group are

- People, or a member of their household, who have been proven guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour with the result they are not considered by the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme or its partners to be suitable tenants.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002 (Section 160A (7)) allows the local authority to treat a person as ineligible where:

"The applicant, or any member of his household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant"

"And at the time of the application, the applicant is still unsuitable to be a tenant because of that behaviour"

The types of behaviour that may in some instances lead to a customer being considered ineligible include:

- Evidence of causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- Being convicted of using a home for illegal or immoral purposes; for example prostitution or drug dealing.
- Conviction for an arrestable offence committed in or near home.
- 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.
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception: for examples, by giving false information.
- Paying money illegally to obtain a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord tenancy.

Each application to the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Housing Register will be considered individually. In deciding whether an applicant is ineligible, the assessing Partner Organisation can only consider behaviour that would have entitled any of the Partner Organisations to seek a Possession Order had the applicant been a secure tenant at that

time. In addition, the behaviour must have been serious enough that an outright order for Possession would have been gained from a court.

N.B. It does not matter whether or not the customer was in fact a secure tenant or not, this is a notional test.

Where a person who has been informed that he is ineligible to join the scheme on this basis can show clearly that his or her behaviour has improved, that person can make a further application to join the scheme.,

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations must also consider whether at the time of the application the applicant is still unsuitable to be a tenant, because of that behaviour. Where a decision that an applicant is ineligible is made by the assessing Partner Organisation, they will put their reasons in writing and send them to the applicant. A copy of the decision letter will also be available for collection at the office of the partner organisation for a period of 14 days. Applicants who are considered to be ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour have the right to request a review of that decision. ([Requesting a Review](#) pg34).

Applicants convicted of a 'serious offence' that has not been spent² and who may pose a threat/risk to the tenants or staff of a partner organisation or the community may be excluded from the register under the definition of unsuitable behaviour. The applicant will remain excluded until information can be provided from a relevant agency proving that the threat/risk no longer exists. The applicant has the right to a review of the decision. ([Requesting a Review](#) pg 34).

It is the applicant's responsibility to show that his/her circumstances or behaviour have changed.

When it has been determined that the suspension has ended, the application will be reassessed, and placed in the appropriate band. The **effective** date in that band is the date of the reassessment. On reassessment if the applicant remains in band F the effective date of the application will be the original date they applied.

1.6.3 Advice and information

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations believe that applicants should be given every assistance when applying to join the scheme, access the scheme and search for suitable properties.

To assist further, the relevant community based statutory and voluntary agencies will be given information and training in order to understand the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme. This will enable them to assist their clients to identify and apply for suitable housing.

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will also proactively promote the Scheme to organisations that work with diverse groups.

² For more information about when convictions become spent see appendix 2.

A full copy of the consistent assessment policy and arealettings plan for each local authority will be available online and from each of the local authorities and housing providers.

Advice on how to join the scheme and how the scheme works will also be available on line and at each of the offices of the local authorities and housing providers. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre authorities provide free independent housing advice to everyone in their district.

1.6.4 False information

All 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 page 21 [False Information](#)).

1.6.5 Data sharing

Any information provided in the application form will be made available to all the partners in the Scheme.

1.6.6 Confidentiality

Information detailing that a person is registered with Myhomechoice Fylde Coast will not be shared with any member of the public without the applicant's consent.

2 Application Form

2.1 Information Required

The application form for MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will ask for information including:

- a) Contact details of the applicant's current landlord, type of tenancy and if a formal notice to quit has been served.
- b) Addresses for the last 5 years including the Landlord's name and address for each address and the reason for leaving
- c) Details of anyone on the application who has been convicted of a criminal offence, details of the crime, date and length of sentence given and long they served.
- d) 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.

It should be noted that if any information is provided on the application form which could impact on the conduct of a future tenancy the exclusion or suspension policy will apply. Reference can also be made to page 22 ([Suspensions](#)) giving examples of unacceptable behaviour.

2.1.1 Application Date and Effective date

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

Within each band applicants are listed in date order by the effective date. The effective date is the date of application, or where applicant's circumstances have changed resulting in a higher band, the effective date will be the date the higher band applies.

2.1.2 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 the current or most recent landlord from those applicants who have previously held a tenancy; this may include a staff reference from interim or supported accommodation. A further landlord reference may be requested as required.
- References will not be accepted from family or friends
- If an unsatisfactory reference is received from a landlord, the application will be reviewed by the Partner Organisation
- If an applicant has not held a tenancy previously, references will be considered from the following people (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Current/former employer
 - Doctor/Health professional who sees you on a regular basis
 - Teacher/College Lecturer
 - Person with professional qualification
 - Person of standing in the community
 - Minister of a recognised religion

If no references are available the Partner Organisation may obtain an SAR (Subject access request). Applicants should note they will be expected to pay for a SAR (subject access request) themselves.

References will help applications for housing to be checked more efficiently and check the suitability of prospective tenants, therefore increasing the likelihood of sustainable tenancies and communities.

With regard to references and internal transfers see page 27 [Transfer Policy](#).

2.1.3 Documentation requirements

Below is a list of what may be required to verify an application dependent on the applicant's circumstances.

What needs verifying	Documents required – one of the following must be provided.
The identity of the applicant and other members of the family	Birth certificate, passport, immigration papers
The applicant is eligible to register for housing	Passport, national identity papers, Home Office documents, European Work Permit and associated wage slips; proof of housing benefit/local housing allowance.
The applicant and other household members live where they say they do and the terms of which they live there (e.g. tenancy agreement)	Electoral register entry, rent book/card, recent bill or credit payment book for gas, electricity or water supply, pension book, confirmation from employer or DSS, tenancy agreement, full driving license, recent bill for Council Tax or telephone, recent bank statement.
The children being registered are the responsibility of the applicant or their partner	Child benefit book, residence order, confirmation from DSS, Social Services, Health and Education authorities, full birth certificate. Where children have previously been cared for by another person, including an ex-partner, and in the absence of a Residence order from the courts, a combination of this evidence must be provided. MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will consider each case on its merits in order to be satisfied that the children's normal place of residence is with the applicant.
Non-dependents have a medical or social need to live with the applicant	Confirmation from either social services or other relevant statutory agency
Proof of pregnancy	Antenatal card/book from hospital, doctors letter
Threatened with eviction	Tenancy agreement, valid notice to quit, Court Order.

If an applicant is unable to provide the necessary documents the case will be considered in light of individual circumstances by the relevant Partner Organisation.

All offers are also subject to verification and the above documents may be required.

3 Application Assessment

3.1 Priority Bands

Each application is assessed and the applicant(s) will be awarded a priority band according to their current circumstances. The scheme uses 6 Bands – A to F, with Band A being the highest priority.

3.1.1 BAND A

The main group in Band A are:

- Homeless applicants where there is a statutory duty to provide housing by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council.

Other applicants to be placed in this band must be able to demonstrate a local connection and at least one of the following ...

- Be a vulnerable person³, who faces imminent discharge from hospital or temporary residential care and for whom there is no suitable accommodation to return to.
- At the discretion of MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast, have exceptional circumstances including being in immediate danger, for example, of physical violence

3.1.2 BAND B

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate a local connection and one of the following:

- Occupy a property where category 1 hazards⁴ have been identified by Environmental Services and in relation to which the landlord has failed to take the required action
- Live in a property, which one of the Partner Organisations requires to be demolished or vacated
- Are an existing tenant of a partner within the Fylde Coast area who under-occupies their existing house and is looking to move to a smaller, more suitable property. This also applies to applicants no longer in need of a property with a disabled adaptation. (This will only apply if the under occupation has arisen after the start of the tenancy, e.g. because some people in the household have moved out.)
- Need to move because of urgent medical or disability reasons and there is a medical assessment that current housing conditions are having a serious detrimental impact on the applicant or members of the applicant's household's health or ability to live independently. The assessment will consider the applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) medical condition, the effect their property has on that condition and how moving to an alternative property could help that condition⁵.
- Need to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which the applicant or a member of their household has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

³ See page 18 for a definition of vulnerable.

⁴ See page 18 for more information on category 1 hazards and property condition

⁵ For more information on medical reasons and medical assessments see pages 17-18

- Need to move because of urgent social or welfare reasons. This can include but is not limited to:
 - the likelihood of admission to residential care or hospital if not re-housed
 - the likelihood of a child being accommodated by the Local Authority if not re-housed
 - The need to give or receive essential care and support.
- Have a serious risk of harm in their present accommodation. This can include but is not limited to:
 - Victims of domestic abuse, serious harassment including racial or homophobic, crime, serious anti social behaviour and witnesses of crime
- Are in a priority need group as outlined in the section 189 of the Housing Act 1996 and as amended in the legal provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002 and are potentially homeless through no fault of their own. This priority will only be awarded by the relevant Local Authority once evidence has been verified and the applicant is co-operating with the local authority to prevent their homelessness.
- Are unintentionally overcrowded in their current accommodation and in need of 2 or more additional bedrooms.
- Leaving Local Authority Care from the relevant Local Authority with appropriate tenancy support where there is a statutory duty to provide housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000.
- Are rough sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping and are supported and referred by the Housing Teams of Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council
- Currently living in supported housing or rehabilitation and are ready for independent living as agreed by the provider and tenancy support (as appropriate) is in place, if required.

3.1.3 BAND C

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate a local connection and ...

- Meet more than one criterion from Band D

3.1.4 BAND D

To be placed in this band, applicants must be able to demonstrate a local connection and one of the following ...

- Need to move because of medical or disability reasons. This is because there is a medical assessment that current housing conditions are affecting the health or ability to live independently but there is no serious detrimental impact. The assessment will consider the applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) medical condition, the effect their property has on that condition and how moving to an alternative property can help that condition⁶.
- Need to move because of social or welfare reasons, which can include but is not limited to:
 - Applicants who need to move to a particular locality within the borough to avoid hardship to themselves or others
- Occupy a property where Category 2 hazards have been identified by Environmental Services and the landlord has failed to take the required action⁷.
- Are unintentionally overcrowded in their current accommodation and in need of one additional bedroom

⁶ For more information on medical reasons and medical assessments see pages 17-18

⁷ For more information on category 2 hazards and property condition please see page 18

- Are assessed by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council as being homeless but there is no priority need for housing
- Are assessed by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council or Wyre Borough Council as being intentionally homeless and there is no statutory duty to re-house
- Have been a homeless household; where there was a statutory duty to provide housing, and they have accepted a qualifying offer of a privately rented property.
- Currently reside in supported accommodation or rehabilitation and are not yet ready for independent living and have no tenancy support in place.
- Is a serving member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces and meets the local connection criteria.

3.1.5 BAND E

To be placed in this band, applicants entering must be able to demonstrate a local connection and one of the following ...

- At least one adult member of the household is in full time employment either in the local areas or elsewhere.
- At least one adult member of the household is contributing to the community through voluntary work. See [Appendix Three](#) for definitions.

3.1.6 BAND F

This Band is for:

- Households who cannot demonstrate a local connection
- Applicants that are adequately housed and are therefore in no housing need
- People awaiting a decision on a homeless application
- Applicants and their households who do not meet any of the criteria within the bands above.
- Applicants who are currently suspended due to meeting the suspension criteria.

3.2 Vulnerability, medical need, disability and property condition

To determine banding, assessment will be made of need that exists and of the adverse effect this has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole. The assessment of the housing needs of many applicants depends on different forms of assessment: environmental health officers, for the assessment of housing condition questions; medical officers for the assessment of medical questions; and social workers for the assessment of other social factors, including the ability of people to cope.

Medical assessments will be completed by the relevant assessing partner organisation using the information on the application form together with the completion of a medical assessment form, and any other supporting information. Information can be provided for example by the applicants GP, hospital consultant, occupational therapist or social worker. Requirement for further information will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be requested where necessary. When an applicant's medical circumstances change the partner organisation should be notified as the level of information required due to the change will differ from case to case.

Vulnerability means “less able to fend for oneself so that injury or detriment will result where a less vulnerable person will be able to cope without harmful effects.”

Urgent medical or disability reasons: (Band B), This banding will be reserved for those exceptional cases where an applicants or tenants life can in some way be at risk because of associated medical and housing difficulties which are inherent in the existing accommodation.

Medical or disability reasons: (Band D), This banding should only be used to reflect where the medical condition or disability have a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances. It is distinguished from Band B because in this instance it is less serious.

Following the assessment the applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the priority banding they have been placed in. If the applicant disagrees with this assessment they can request a review of the decision (see [Requesting a Review](#) page 34). When an applicant's medical circumstances change the partner organisation should be notified as the level of information required will differ from case to case.

Property condition assessments will be completed by the relevant assessing partner organisation using the information on the application form together with information provided from the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer. Local Authority Environmental Health Officers may assess a private sector property as having one or more category 1 or 2 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. In all cases the Local Authority Private Sector Housing Team will use all powers available to remedy the hazards and priority will only be awarded where the landlord has failed to take the required action. Once the hazards have been resolved the priority will end. The Housing Health Rating Scheme is used to assess property condition and deals with 29 hazards. Each hazard is assessed separately and scored. If a hazard is serious with a high score it will be a Category 1 Hazard. All other hazards are Category 2 hazards.

3.3 Deliberately worsening your circumstances

Where an applicant deliberately makes their housing situation worse, so as to try to gain an advantage under the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast banding system, this may be considered as “contrivance”. Where such cases are proven, the application will be reviewed, in order to disregard the applicants ‘contrived’ criteria. The application will be re-banded on the basis of any remaining housing needs criteria which have not been contrived.

Examples

- a) Applicants deliberately leave suitable accommodation, for no reasonable reason and moves into accommodation, which is less suitable to their needs.
- b) Applicants have been considered to be “intentionally homeless” and have moved into overcrowded accommodation.
- c) Applicants deliberately move into properties which are more adverse to their health or more environmentally worse.
- d) Applicants intentionally overcrowd their present accommodation.

The assessing MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisation will write to applicants to advise them of their banding. Applicants have the right to request a review of that decision (see [Requesting a Review](#) page 34).

3.4 Home Visits

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to carry out a home visit to assist with the application assessment and/or to check that housing circumstances are as described on the application form. Applicants are expected to allow the visiting officer access to all parts of their home.

Reasonable notice will be given and a letter with a suggested appointment time and date will be sent. If the appointment is inconvenient the applicant can ask for another date and time.

If, after three attempts, the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisation has not been able to arrange a visit, the applicant will be notified that they will be removed from the scheme unless the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisation considers that they should remain in the scheme.

3.5 Local Connection

Anyone can apply to join the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme (provided they are not ineligible).

However, when deciding the priority to be given to the application, in most cases (except Band F), applicants must be able to show they have a local connection. They have a local connection if they can demonstrate one of the following:-

- Local residency – they have lived in the area for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 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.

4 How the scheme operates

(this section will be finalised on procurement of the system)

- Applicants can register with MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast by completing a housing application form. The application form will be made available to download from the following address XXX or can be completed on-line. Application forms are also available from each of the partners.
- Application forms can be returned to any of the following partners listed below who will register the application.
 - Blackpool Council,
 - Blackpool Coastal Housing
 - New Fylde Housing,
 - Regenda (Wyre HA),
 - Great Places Housing Group,
 - Places for People
 - Muir Group HA

The applicant will be sent confirmation of the registration including bidding number and band. See section 4.1 [notification](#) below.

- Properties, will be advertised each week at all contact points. Applicants can bid any time during that week until 12 midnight on the day the bidding closes. This is called the weekly bidding cycle.
- Applicants can bid for properties in a number of ways and will need their registration number, date of birth and property reference number to place a bid. Bids can be made by one of the following methods:
 - On the internet [www.XXX](#)
 - On the telephone – automated bidding line number XXX
 - By mobile phone/text XXX
 - In Person
- The applicant with the appropriate local connection; priority and who has been in the relevant band the longest will be put forward for the property. If an applicant appears at the top of more than one shortlist in a bidding cycle, they will be asked for their preference as they will only be considered for one of those properties.
- Information about properties let each week will be published via XXXX. Personal details of successful applicants will not be included.
- The decisions in respect of allocation of housing will be made by officers of the respective partner organisations, and in accordance with the Code of Guidance at the point where an allocation is being contemplated checks will be made to ensure that the same amount of housing need is still applicable to the applicant to whom it is proposed to allocate a property.

4.1 Notification

Once an application has been assessed and entered into the scheme, the applicant will receive a letter confirming their application details. This notification will include:

- Details of any suspension or non registration
- The band in which the applicant has been placed
- The size of property the applicant is eligible for

- The application date
- A reminder about informing the Partner Organisation of any change in circumstances
- The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast review procedure
- A personal reference number to allow bidding
- The name and contact details of the assessing Partner Organisation and who to direct communication to

Applicants will also receive notification of their application if they have submitted a change of circumstances form.

4.2 False Information

Applicants who are found to have deliberately given false information on their MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast application form will have their application reviewed immediately. This may result in the banding being changed or the application being suspended.

If an applicant is found to have deliberately changed or worsened their housing situation in order to be placed into a higher band, an immediate review of an application may also be undertaken. If an applicant is rehoused on the basis of providing false information, steps may be taken to end the tenancy. In addition criminal proceedings may be taken, which could result in the applicant receiving a fine up to a maximum of £5,000. (Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996).

All 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.

4.3 Access to Personal Information

Individuals are entitled under the Data Protection Act (1998) to request details of their personal data held by MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast. A charge may be made for providing this information.

Information relating to priority banding and chances of securing appropriate accommodation is available to all applicants through the web-based system or by contacting any partner organisation.

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

4.4 Notification of Change of Circumstances

If an applicant's circumstances change the applicant must contact MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast as soon as possible.

If the applicant is already in the scheme their details will be updated and a re-assessment will be made

If an applicant moves into a higher band, the new priority will be awarded from the date of notification of a change in circumstances and this will be the effective date of application. If the applicant moves into a lower band then their effective date will remain the same as the application date.

Checks will also be made at the time of the offer to ensure that the household details are correct and the property is suitable for the household size. If a household's current housing situation is different from their housing registration details, then a housing offer may be withdrawn. The application may be suspended until the applicant provides proof of their change of circumstances.

4.5 Application checks

Application details will be checked on a regular basis. Applicants may receive a review letter asking them to confirm or update their details, if no response is received to the review letter within 28 days the application will be cancelled and a letter confirming this will be sent to the applicant.

4.6 Applicants who fail to bid

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast may from time to time review applicants who have not taken part in the bidding process and ascertain the reason for not bidding. This may result in their application being reassessed or cancelled or additional support services being put in place.

4.7 Cancelling Applications

An application will be cancelled from the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme in the following circumstances:

- At the request of an applicant
- An applicant does not respond to an application review, within the specified time limit
- A local authority or registered social landlord has housed the applicant
- A tenant completes a mutual exchange
- An applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address
- An applicant has died
- An applicant has not supplied the relevant information requested within the given timescales.
- An applicant becomes ineligible for housing

Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision. (See page 34 - [Requesting a Review](#)).

Where an applicant applies to re-join the scheme at a later date their new date of application will be the date they re-apply.

4.8 Suspensions

In certain circumstances applications will be suspended. This can occur at any time from initial registration to the offer stage. Applicants who fall within the suspension criteria, which are set out below, will remain 'held' on the system in band F. This means the applicant cannot 'bid' for a MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast property.

Each suspension will be considered on a case by case basis by the assessing Partner Organisation. Where a suspension is applied to an application the applicant will be informed in writing of the reason for suspension, the timescale and steps the applicant could take to remove the suspension. It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the assessing Partner Organisation at the end of the suspension period to request a review of the suspension. 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. The maximum length of suspension is two years.

4.8.1 Suspension Criteria

Suspension may apply where:

The applicant:

- 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 [Debt](#) section below)
- Has deliberately or negligently caused damage to property belonging to a Partner Organisation or any other Landlord, whether the tenant of that property or not.
- Has made false or misleading statements. (See page 21 [False Information](#)).

Or the applicant or any member of the household:

- Has engaged in anti-social behaviour, (whether or not they were at the time a tenant of a Local Housing Authority or Social Housing Provider) and has not maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address that behaviour.
- Is a current tenant of a participating landlord in the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast CBL scheme (or any other Social housing provider) and is or has been the subject of action for breach of tenancy.
- Has been convicted of using their home, or allowing it to be used, for immoral or illegal purposes.

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

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

4.8.2 Debt

Applicants with arrears or housing related debt such as rechargeable repairs of under £500 owed to a landlord including any of the Partner Organisations may only be registered as live on the system if they agree to meet the conditions of an agreed payment plan which typically will mean the payment of a minimum of 12 **consecutive** weekly payments. The assessing partner organisation will then review the arrangement. Alternatively, a lump sum to reduce the debt -as agreed - may also be accepted.

An offer of accommodation will only be made if the payment arrangement has been met unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered on its own merits e.g. reasons for the arrears and previous steps taken to tackle arrears.

Applicants with arrears over £500 will usually be suspended. This will be based on a decision made by the Partner Organisation taking into account all circumstances. A decision will be made on the length of suspension and repayment arrangements.

In both sets of circumstances the applicant will be informed in writing of any decision made together with information about the right to request a review of the decision.

Where there are both rent arrears and housing related debt(s) the whole amount will be added together. The total amount to repay will determine which course of action is followed as detailed above.

4.8.3 Anti social behaviour

Where anti social behaviour has taken place that does not come under the definition of unsuitable behaviour, consideration will be given to the nature of the anti-social behaviour. This will include: when the incident(s) took place and the behaviour of the person(s) since. The Partner Organisation may take into account information obtained in processing their application to MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast where appropriate. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision made and the right to a review of the decision. If the decision notification is not received by the applicant, it will be treated as having been given if it is made available at the respective partner organisation's office for a period of 21 days. The suspension will remain until the reason for the suspension has either been resolved satisfactorily; or there is evidence of an improvement in the behaviour of the applicant or a member of the household over a sustained period.

It should be noted that to reduce the risk of anti social behaviour problems all partners of MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast may use starter tenancies or introductory tenancies for all new tenants.

5 Letting of Properties

5.1 Lettings Plans

At present, demand for social housing in the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast area greatly exceeds supply. In view of the high demand for housing on the Fylde Coast, coupled with a limited supply of housing, allocations may be distributed between bands. This will ensure that MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast offers

- a balance between meeting housing needs of existing tenants and new applicants,
- promotes more sustainable and balanced communities
- and widens the housing opportunities for those who are not in greatest housing need.

Specially adapted properties will be targeted for allocation to people with an illness or disability. Similarly, ground floor and sheltered housing will be targeted for allocations to people eligible for this type of housing.

Each Local Authority as part of their strategic housing function will determine how the housing stock should be allocated as part of an Area Lettings Plan. The Local Authority will formulate the area plan in consultation with all the RSLs who own stock in the relevant Borough. The Area Lettings Plan will take into account the size and composition of the waiting list, the profile of the stock, the vacancies which are likely to come available, and if the number of transfers should be limited.

5.2 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 rural properties.

5.3 Property Sizes

The numbers of bedrooms for which applicants are eligible is determined by the size of their household. 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.

Below are detailed typical examples of households and the size of accommodation they would be generally eligible for:

Single Persons or Couples	One bedroom property
Two adults living together not in a relationship	Two bedroom property
Parent(s) with one child	Two bedroom property
Parent(s) with two children of same sex or different sexes under the ages of seven years	Two bedroom property
Parent(s) with children of different sexes – one or both being over the age of seven years	Three bedroom property

The lettings policies of individual partner organisations may further restrict the size of families that may apply for properties – such restrictions will be included in the property details of each MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast advert.

Requests for an additional bedroom to accommodate a live-in carer will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate that a live-in carer is essential and the carer is already living with them or is ready to do so when accommodation is available.

Requests for an additional bedroom due to health or disability needs will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate, or it is verified by a medical professional, that an additional bedroom is essential to prevent severe detriment to a person's health and well-being.

Because of the very high demand for properties on the Fylde Coast, additional bedrooms cannot be given to applicants who do not have children who normally live with them or who might reasonably be expected to live with them. However individual family circumstances and court orders will be taken into account on a case by case basis. This will normally be a permanent arrangement and not a temporary agreement.

5.3.1 Expectant applicants

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

Following the birth, and receipt of birth certificate/s, a re-assessment will be made.

5.4 Property Descriptions

Properties advertised will carry (where possible) a photograph of the property 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 charged/service charges
- Eligibility criteria

5.5 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 MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast and be eligible for an offer, or to bid for a property. If a joint tenancy is refused by any of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations, a clear reason will be provided to the applicants in writing. Applicants can request a review of the decision if required (page 34 [Requesting a Review](#)). When one of the joint tenants gives notice to the relevant MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisation, discretion may be used when deciding to offer the property - or an alternative property - as a sole tenancy to the other joint tenant.

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

5.6 Successions and Assignments

When an introductory or secure tenant dies, a member of their family living with them at the time of their death may have a right to succeed to the tenancy.

When an introductory or secure tenant dies and 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 tenant's death or
- b) Accepted responsibility for the tenant's dependents

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

An introductory or secure tenant may be able to assign their 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 or civil partnership breakdown or family proceedings OR
- To a member of the tenant's family who would qualify to succeed to the tenancy if the tenant had died.

5.7 Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is where two tenants are in agreement to swap their properties (in their current state) and tenancies. The landlord's written permission is required prior to exchange.

An exchange can only be refused in certain circumstances for example if the landlord thinks the home is too big or too small for the person who wants it, or if the tenancy agreement has been breached (i.e. no longer secure due to suspended Possession order or Notice of Seeking Possession). All mutual exchanges will be dealt with by the relevant Partner Organisations.

5.8 Transfer Policy

All existing tenants of partners have the right to apply for a transfer, subject to 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.

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 may be suspended from the scheme (refer to [Suspension Criteria](#) page 23). The proportion of eligible transfers may be determined in each Local Authority Area Lettings Plan.

6 Definitions and Exceptions

6.1 Support in Accommodation

The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations will work closely with all the relevant health and social services departments to identify opportunities to rehouse those in need of housing with care packages and other means of support in suitable accommodation. Where such a package is not immediately available, the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations reserve the right not to offer accommodation until care or support arrangements are agreed and the client has signed up to the package. This is dependent on suitable and appropriate accommodation being available.

6.2 Supported Accommodation

Applicants who are currently living in supported housing or rehabilitation will not be awarded priority Band A until they are ready for independent living and/or tenancy support is in place if required.

6.3 Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing is normally for people aged 55 years or over. However some schemes will be for applicants aged 65+ only. Schemes are for applicants who can live independently and are able to manage alone but would benefit from the security of an alarm system and the services of a warden in an emergency. This includes people who can live independently with the aid of a social services care package.

People who are below the age of 55 years may be eligible for sheltered housing because of 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.

6.4 Extra Care

Extra care housing is sheltered housing with special facilities and additional services. A small number of schemes are located across the Fylde Coast.

6.5 Adapted Homes and Ground Floor Accommodation

An adapted home has equipment fitted or adaptations made to it, to help a person with illness, disability or where there is a need. Applications will automatically be registered for suitably adapted accommodation in accordance with identified need and placed in the appropriate band. An Occupational Therapy assessment may be required before an offer is made. Adapted property allocations will be prioritised to those with appropriate need.

Applications from people with an illness or disability will automatically be considered for ground floor accommodation. Allocations for this type of property will be prioritised to those with the appropriate need.

6.6 16 & 17 Year Olds

People aged 16 and 17 years of age can apply to go on the housing register although they would not usually be offered a tenancy until they are 18 years old unless there is a statutory duty to house for example because:

- They are leaving care
- They are lone pregnant or already have a child/children
- They are homeless and owed a main duty under s.193 of the Housing Act 1996 (part VII) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Or:

- They are residing in supported accommodation and ready for independent living, as agreed by the support provider and appropriate tenancy support is in place if required.

People 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.

Young people will only be considered for a tenancy on the condition that they accept a referral to a floating support provider to ensure that the tenancy succeeds.

6.7 Offenders

Offenders may apply to the housing register whilst in custody, or submit a change of address form if already a current applicant prior to committal.

The application will remain inactive but the applicant will accrue waiting time on the list, therefore when the application is made live the original date of application will be the effective date. The application 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 of the three local authorities.

6.8 Vulnerable Groups/Social Inclusion

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisations believe that applicants should be given every assistance to access the scheme and search for suitable properties.

To assist further, the relevant community based statutory and voluntary agencies will be given information and training in order to understand the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast scheme. This will enable them to assist their clients to identify and apply for suitable housing.

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will also proactively promote the Scheme to organisations that work with diverse groups.

6.9 Rough Sleepers

Applicants who are rough sleeping (or are threatened with rough sleeping or have a history of rough sleeping) and who are supported and referred by the relevant local authority will be awarded the appropriate priority once all information has been verified

6.10 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.

7 Homeless Applicants & Supported Accommodation

The Local Authority has a duty to secure suitable accommodation to applicants who are accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 (part VII) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. Applicants will be entered on the scheme and can initially have full choice of areas for four weeks. However, if after four weeks (from the date of the decision to accept the applicant as homeless) the applicant has not found alternative suitable accommodation, staff from the relevant LA will bid on their behalf and they will be offered the first suitable property (except in extreme mitigating circumstances).

7.1 One Offer Policy

The Local Authority duty will come to an end if the homeless applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation. The applicant will be informed that the relevant local authority has discharged their duty under section 193 of the above act.

If the homeless applicant is dissatisfied with the Local Authority's decision the applicant has the right to request a review regarding the suitability of any accommodation offered as a discharge of a homelessness duty.

7.2 Supported Accommodation

Applicants in supported accommodation will be given a full choice of areas, appropriately banded and will use the scheme to access settled accommodation. In circumstances where households are not moving on and this places other households at risk of homelessness, then staff from the relevant Local Authority may bid on their behalf and they will be offered the first suitable property in that Borough. The household must be ready for independent living as agreed by the provider and appropriate tenancy support must be in place, if required. If the applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation then they may be reassessed.

8 Direct Lets

8.1 Properties not advertised

In some exceptional circumstances, MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast may allocate properties directly. Examples include:

- Tenants who need to be decanted
- Specially adapted properties
- Extra care vacancies
- Applicants who have succeeded to a tenancy who 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 one of the three 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 is received direct from the Home Office. Referrals direct from Police Authorities will be dealt with under the normal allocation policy.
- Assisting a Local Authority in relation to Homelessness Duties.

8.2 Refusals of Direct Lettings

If an applicant refuses a direct let the applicant must give their reasons for refusal. An investigation will then take place to assess if the offer was reasonable or unreasonable. Consultation will take place with other officers or professionals as part of the investigation if required. If the Partner Organisation decides that the offer made was a reasonable one, the applicant will be advised in writing of the reasons of this finding and the effect this decision has on their application.

The applicant will also be advised of the right to request a review. (See page 34-[Requesting a Review](#)). If the offer was found to be unreasonable, it will be withdrawn with no consequences to the applicant.

9 Allocating Properties

9.1 Selection Process

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.

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.

Selected applicants will be given the opportunity to view the property prior to tenancy sign-up.

If the applicant chooses to refuse the property, the reasons for the refusal will be recorded by the partner landlord advertising the property.

9.2 Refusal following a bid

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will offer assistance and guidance to applicants, including vulnerable 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 according to the normal bidding process.

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.

9.3 Feedback on successful bids

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will publish details of the number of bids for each property giving details of the successful applicant's band and their band date. This will help applicants determine their prospects of success in obtaining housing.

10 Requesting a Review

Applicants can request a review of any of the MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Partner Organisation's decisions regarding their application. This includes:

- The level of priority awarded
- Entry on to the housing register
- Suspension or exclusion from the register
- Entitlement of the size of property required
- Removal of the applicant from the register other than at the applicants own request
- Withdrawal of Offer by one of the Partner Organisations

10.1 Procedure

Requests for a review must be made within 21 days of the original notification and should include the applicant's reasons for believing the decision made was wrong. The Partner Organisation has the discretion to extend the time if it considers this would be reasonable. Requests should be directed to the assessing Partner Organisation.

Requests can be made by applicants or their representatives by the following methods:-

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

10.2 How the decision will be reviewed

A senior officer of the Partner Organisation who has not been involved in the original decision will look at the request for a review. The officer will base his or her decision on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, they may need to ask for more information to help them make a decision.

The review will be dealt with within eight weeks of the applicant notifying the relevant Partner Organisation that they wish a review to be carried out and they will be informed, in writing of the decision. The Partner Organisation has discretion to extend the time if it considers this would be reasonable.

If the original decision is upheld, the letter will give reasons supporting the review decision.

If the original decision is quashed, the letter will explain the reasons and what action the Partner Organisation will take in the respect of the applicants status and/or priority on the Housing register.

If the review is regarding the withdrawal of an offer (or refusal to make an offer), by one of the Partner Organisations, the property in question will not be 'held' whilst the review takes place. It will be offered instead to the next successful applicant. If the original decision is quashed, the applicant will be offered the next suitable property of their choice. In certain circumstances the Partner Organisation may make the applicant a Direct Offer.

Should an applicant wish to challenge the Partner Organisation's review decision, they should follow the complaints procedure, details of which can be found from each partner.

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.

An applicant may wish to take their own independent legal advice through a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

11 Monitoring and Review of the Scheme

A number of outcomes within the scheme will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the system is operating in the most effective way.

11.1 Policy Review

The MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy will be regularly reviewed. Minor changes that do not significantly affect the spirit of the policy will be approved by a majority agreement amongst the partners.

Unless decided by statutory legislation, the Partner Organisations have the right to use discretion when allocating properties. This means that in certain circumstances, the Partner Organisation can make decisions that supersede the detail in this policy.

Major changes to the policy will be consulted on with all partners and customers. Approval will then be gained through the appropriate governance arrangements including Council members and RSL board members.

11.2 Equal Opportunities Statement

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast 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:-

- Make sure our services and how they are delivered meet the diverse needs of the local people
- Make sure our buildings are as accessible as possible
- Provide information about our services in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, on audio cassette or computer disk and providing information in languages other than English or translators, including British sign language interpreters where they are needed.
- 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.
- 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

MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast will regularly review its practices, policies, staff training and monitoring arrangements to ensure that people are treated fairly regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation and that they can access what they need.

The 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 other disadvantaged and under represented groups.

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

11.3 Complaints

Any complaints regarding administration should be directed initially to the organisation processing the 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 and their complaint has not been adequately dealt with.

Contact Details:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

12 Appendix One: 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 reside in 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK 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. 		

13 Appendix Two: How a Conviction becomes spent

The way in which a conviction can become 'spent' under the ROA 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.

13.1 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 a half years - **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***

Young 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 the longer**

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

*Note: These periods are reduced by half if the offender was under eighteen at the date of conviction.

14 Appendix Three: Definition of Working Households and Community Contribution

14.1 Working Households

Households where at least one of the applicants is currently in employment. For the purposes of this consistent assessment policy employment is described as;

- Working for 16 hours per week or more. The employment must have been held for a minimum of 6 months prior to the application for the award in order to be eligible. It should be noted that this must be confirmed at point of application and evidenced at point of offer.

14.1 Community Contribution

Households where at least one of the applicants is currently undertaking voluntary work. For the purposes of this consistent assessment policy voluntary work (community contribution) is described as:

- Choosing to give your time to benefit other people without being paid for it 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 should be noted that this must be confirmed at point of application and evidenced at point of offer.
- 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).

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	3 RD FEBRUARY 2010	8

REVIEW OF ASSETS

Public Item

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

Summary

At its meeting on 9 December the Committee considered a report on the management of leisure assets and resolved that officers should review the letting of leisure assets where subsidies are provided. Cabinet subsequently asked for this recommendation to be extended to all assets.

This report sets out the work that has been done to date to identify the extent to which Council properties are occupied on a subsidised basis, and the additional work which needs to be undertaken to provide the Committee with a full picture of the subsidies provided to occupiers of Council land and buildings.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the approach for undertaking the review of assets and appoints a small member task and finish group to meet to assist in this work.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Portfolio Title: Planning and Development

Councillor Name: Cllr. Dr. Trevor Fiddler

Report

1. At its meeting on 9th December 2010 the Committee resolved to request that officers review all the Council's leisure assets to identify:

Continued....

(a) where there are subsidies provided and

(b) to examine these on a case by case basis to see whether commercial charges should be applied

2. At its meeting on 9th December 2010 Cabinet resolved to note and approve the recommendations made by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee on 9 December 2010 subject to an addendum that the review should consider the Council's assets as a whole rather than being constrained to leisure assets.

3. As a result of these resolutions, work has commenced on a review of Council property assets which are occupied on the basis that the occupier pays less than a market rent. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the progress made to date and the additional work which is required to complete the review.

4. A number of assets have initially been identified which have previously been let by the Council at less than full rental value. Further work is required by the Principal Estates Surveyor to confirm the list and to undertake a valuation of each property to assess its open market rental value. This will reveal the financial impact of these concessionary lettings.

5. It is, however, difficult to look at rents in isolation. Many of the occupiers receive additional support from the Council including grants and the payment of costs such as repairs, heating and lighting and rates. Some organisations, such as bowling clubs, also receive funding towards grounds maintenance. A full assessment of the total cost of this support will require the input of staff from the Technical Services, Parks and Leisure and Community Services sections of the Council.

6. An example of a concessionary letting is 7 St. Georges Road which is let to Age Concern at a rent of £3,750 p.a. which is less than full rental value. Age Concern also receive a grant from the Council and the Council is responsible for repairs. Renewal of this lease was deferred in order not to prejudice the Ashton Gardens restoration scheme but Age Concern is now keen to proceed. A report is shortly to be submitted to Cabinet recommending renewal of the lease at market rental value, with an increase in the grant to cover the additional rent. This will not increase the overall cost to Age Concern or the Council, but will provide transparency as the grant will reflect the full extent of the Council's financial support.

7. It is suggested that given the depth of information that needs to be prepared and considered for each asset that a small member task and finish group be formed to undertake this task during late February/early March. The group would then make observations to the next scheduled Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 24th March. The Committee could then make recommendations to Cabinet for any actions in relation to each asset.

Risk Assessment

This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. Therefore there are no risks to address

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Gary Sams / Paul Walker	(01253) 658462	Date of report	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Agenda and minutes from Policy Development Scrutiny Committee	9 th December 2010	http://www.fylde.gov.uk/meetings/details/876/

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no implications
Legal	There are no implications
Community Safety	There are no implications
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	There are no implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



Date	6 January 2011
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Vice-Chairman) Brenda Ackers, Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Christine Akeroyd, John Davies, Leonard Davies, Kevin Eastham, Tony Ford, Craig Halewood, Paul Hayhurst, Karen Henshaw JP, Dawn Prestwich, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	Sue Fazackerley; Cheryl Little
Officers	Joanna Scott, Clare Platt, Christine Miller, Annie Womack
Others	Jennifer Cross of X Associates; members of the public

Public Platform

A member of the public had expressed a wish to speak to the committee on item 5 – Transfer of Assets to Town and Parish Councils. He explained that he had made a formal objection to the Asset Transfer Notice, and spoke against the transfer, stating his opinion that it was not good value for taxpayers.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

Councillors Christine Akeroyd and Tony Ford declared a personal interest in item 5, as St Annes Town Councillors; Councillor Elaine Silverwood declared an interest in item 5, as a Kirkham Town Councillor; Councillor Karen Henshaw JP declared an interest in item 5 as a Friend of the Park.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 December 2010 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Tony Ford for Councillor David Chedd

Councillor Christine Akeroyd for Councillor George Caldwell

Councillor Dawn Prestwich for Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse

Councillor Paul Hayhurst for Councillor Elizabeth Oades

Councillor Kevin Eastham for Councillor Heather Speak

4. Substance Misuse in Fylde – an Overview

This report was introduced by Councillor Cheryl Little, Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing.

She explained that the topic had arisen at a previous meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board during a discussion about a potential PACT (Police and Community Together) Review. At that meeting, Cllr Little had volunteered to bring a report on Substance Misuse to the committee, for information and background.

The report gave detail about the levels of drug and alcohol abuse, and profiles of alcohol related harm and alcohol related indicators for Fylde.

Cllr Little outlined the incidence of alcohol-related violent crime, and the potential health consequences for abusers. She also gave an overview of how the National Drug Strategy is delivered, through the work of LDAAT and of Young Addaction. Continuation of the work of a Fylde Specialist Alcohol Worker for Young People was secured for this financial year by funding from LDAAT.

The Chairman advised that the PACT Review T&F group would consider the matters raised at their next meeting.

The committee resolved:

1. To note the report.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

5. Transfer of Assets to Town / Parish Councils

The Chairman explained that this report was to be reviewed as an opportunity to comment upon a draft report, and clarified that Kirkham Town Council had

raised further queries which were yet to be resolved, and that St Annes Town Council had requested a deferral until after the May elections.

Ms Clare Platt, Director of Community Services then introduced the report. She explained that Jennifer Cross, Managing Director of X Associates, had been commissioned by the Council to assist in moving forward the transfer of assets. She asked that the committee take the opportunity to comment on the draft report and make recommendations for the future consideration of Cabinet.

Ms Cross gave members a resume of her background and explained that her brief was to ensure that there was a stable, cost-effective model to take forward. The report itself examined the key legal, operational and financial implications of transferring community assets.

The work was started in July with a valuation of assets and an analysis of the cost of maintaining them. The review had lead to the identification of strategically important assets as well as community assets which could be managed at local level.

Page 9 of the report showed the full extent of the work undertaken.

Ms Cross explained that part of her brief was to demonstrate the effects of different decisions about how maintenance of assets could be financed, and the effect of such decisions on special expenses and Council Tax. The effects on Council Tax would depend on the decisions of this Council, and the way that Council Tax is affected is both directly related to the transfer of community assets, and to the way that the costs of maintaining strategically important assets are charged across the borough.

Her view was that strategic assets are valuable borough-wide resources and that the cost should be borne across the borough. FBC had always charged special expenses based on full cost recovery within the current policy framework, and had never offset any of the Revenue Support Grant or National Non-Domestic Rates against maintenance of these assets. Those sources of income benefit all taxpayers across the Borough as they are netted off Borough expenditure. Special expenses related to the costs of maintaining community assets would be taken out of the Council's budgets and the parish councils would precept for those. FBC would then need to consider how the costs of maintaining strategic assets should be recharged.

Ms Cross referred to Kirkham Town Council and it's concerns about having a 3 year transitional contract with the Borough Council to manage the transferred open spaces. She stressed that she was not making a criticism of the competence of the Town Council, but the proposed transfers would mean a large increase in the budget to be managed and she was concerned about available capacity. It was part of her brief to look at this. She suggested that a transitional arrangement would give the Town Councils the opportunity to develop their management capacity and to ensure that the open spaces continued to be managed effectively and efficiently until new arrangements

could be bedded in. It also gave FBC the opportunity to manage any residual costs of the service.

She agreed that Kirkham Town Council had submitted an extensive list of queries that week and that a response would be provided to those.

In terms of negotiation with St Annes Town Council, she advised the committee that it had deferred the decision until after the next election and had decided to take independent financial advice.

However, she felt that sufficient detailed information had been, or soon would be, made available to both Town Councils in order for this work to move forward, and that the Council would need to consider how the costs of maintaining strategic assets should be charged for in the future.

As part of her brief she had been asked to make sure that the council had a sustainable position moving forward, and to examine ways of managing risks to ensure that there was not a failure of the service because of the change. Whilst she appreciated that there were some concerns about her evaluation of the risks and proposed management of them, particularly the proposed transitional period, she hoped that Members would appreciate that such proposals were necessary as a part of good governance.

The debate that followed was wide ranging. Members had a number of comments and queries for Ms Cross and Ms Platt. They included:

- Why it had not been felt necessary to consult with parish councils who were already managing their open space assets, so as to get a clear picture of the issues; this was viewed as an oversight which should be rectified.
- Why it was necessary to roll up the strategic asset issue with the transfer of community assets. It was felt that these were entirely separate issues and should be dealt with separately.
- This was also cited as a reason for the delay in the transfer of community assets to Kirkham Town Council.
- It was not equitable to transfer costs to Town and Parish Councils without transferring money to manage them, and this should be a consideration.
- FBC should consider paying some of the Revenue Support Grant to Town and Parish Councils to manage community assets.
- Members wanted to know who had selected the assets to be classified as “strategic”, which were proposed to be charged to all of Fylde’s residents, and on what basis, particularly when residents were paying for local sites as well.
- Members suggested that assets should not be transferred, but that a management agreement should be implemented.

After the debate the committee resolved:

1. That officers explore Asset Transfers further in relation to Kirkham Town Council, allowing the Town Council to go out to competitive tender for the parks and open space maintenance with outcomes showing localism, and delivering efficiencies and value for money services.
2. That officers be requested to bring forward further reports on:
 - a) Identification of which assets constitute strategic assets
 - b) The budgetary and governance implications of open space transfer to Town Councils, separate to the budgetary options in relation to the strategic assets.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

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